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SERB DOUBTS

Living in cross hairs of NATO

by Justin Brown
Special to The Christian Science Monitor

WHEN an earthquake hit northern Serbia last week, the people of Belgrade thought it was the Big One - not a natural disaster, but the bomb attack NATO had been threatening after seven months of violence down in Kosovo.

I was in that southern

Idaho Battles Image as Haven for Hate

A white-supremacist group marched here July 18. State has most hate groups per capita.

by Brad Knickerbocker
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

COEUR D'ALENE, IDAHO- When someone says "Idaho," do you think: "First state with a Jewish governor; first state where a native American won statewide office; fourth state to allow women the right to vote; first state to pass the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)?"

Or do you think: "Site of the shoot-out



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TO ASSESS THE PERFORMANCE OF JOURNALISM...
TO HELP STIMULATE CONTINUING IMPROVE-
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FOR WHAT IS RIGHT, FAIR, AND DECENT"

From the founding editorial, 1961



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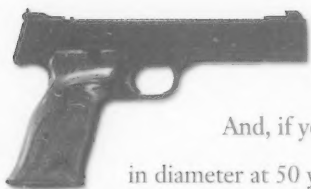
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publisher's note

A Few Words Upon Bowing Out

by Joan Konner

As you will see from her typically gracious and fact-packed note below, Joan Konner is retiring as our publisher, and we just want to tell you something about what she means to us — as our colleague, as our friend, and as the energetically effective champion of this oldest and most influential journal of press analysis and criticism.

Joan, who simultaneously (and remarkably!) was the dean of the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism from 1988 to 1997, views the school as the cathedral of journalism and CJR as its bible. She has been a constant source of provocative ideas for this good book and she has courageously and creatively fought our battles. More than once, she rescued our financially challenged magazine by bringing in contributions from foundations, companies, and individ-



ual donors. We — and our readers — owe her a lasting debt for that, and more.

Above all, Joan is an inspirational journalist, one who graduated from the school ('61), started in newspapering, and later moved on to twenty-five years as a television reporter, writer, director, and top producer for NBC and PBS. She created more than fifty documentaries on a wide range of major issues and won almost every TV award, including twelve Emmys.

Happily, Joan stays with the school as a professor, teaching about ideas in journalism. She puts it neatly: "I don't intend to leave journalism — just to move on to a new angle and a different beat." Now, over to Joan.

— Marshall Loeb and the staff of the Columbia Journalism Review

“With this issue, the undersigned bows out of official duties as publisher of the *Review*. It's high time. . . .” The quote comes from the signoff publisher's note of the late Edward Barrett, former dean of the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism and founder of the *Columbia Journalism Review* who served as its publisher for twenty years. At 71, Dean Barrett turned the leadership of the magazine over to then dean Osborn Elliott, whom Barrett described as “not exactly unqualified, having served successively as editor and as president of *Newsweek*.”

It is with this sense of history that after eleven years as the third publisher of the *Review*, with this issue I bow out of official duties as publisher. The job came along with being dean of the journalism school, and I continued for two years after stepping down as dean to fulfill my commitment to several generous funders who made multi-year grants during my tenure to support the magazine through this fiscal year.

As Dean Barrett wrote in the March/April 1982 issue, “The *Review* has hardly attained affluence, ending up in the red one year, in the black the next.” Some things don't change. During my time as publisher, I conducted three studies to assess the health and strength of the magazine. Each time the report came back the same. All vital signs were healthy, except the bottom line. That matched up with the charts of all small magazines of ideas and opinion. None are financially self-sustaining. Magazines that serve other than marketplace values must find different means of support to remain viable.

Now, as I take leave, these are the vital signs: circulation went up close to 10 percent from 1996 to 1998. We show a paid circulation of 28,000. We have a dedicated core of read-

ers who demonstrate their commitment by delivering to us one of the highest long-term renewal rates in the nation — 84 percent. Studies report that 2.2 persons read every issue. Thus, as a sales and promotion pitch, I have referred to the magazine for some time as a press conference for nearly 70,000 people — largely journalists but also many other opinion leaders and involved citizens. Advertising remains steady this year despite sales force contraction.

This should make for a healthy bottom line, but, alas, the economics of publishing are not in our favor. We lack the capital to make essential investment. Technology and a new, acclaimed online edition, along with other necessary increments, have increased our costs. Because the editorial product is the mission of the magazine, a higher proportion of our funds are invested in that area than Magazine Publishing 101 allows.

Even so, I call the *Review* a miracle magazine. Its talented and dedicated staff is small, to say the least, according to industry standards, and the pay scale tracks with the academic neighborhood in which it lives rather than the commercial publishing world with which it competes. That the magazine has been able to establish and maintain the highest editorial standards that it demands from the rest of journalism is an extraordinary accomplishment. So, too, has been the performance from the minimal business staff.

I am pleased to report that, counting in the generous contributions from foundations and other funders, the budget has been balanced nine out of the eleven years of my tenure. In response to the financial potholes in the early '90s, passionate supporters of the magazine and journalism idealists

rallied to help the *Columbia Journalism Review* find new sources of support. They recognized the magazine as a unique institution in our field that sets the standard for quality journalism and provides an essential service to the industry. They contributed their time, energy, knowledge, and clout to rescue CJR from budget and accounting death. By the grace of foundations and friends, we were able to survive and in some ways thrive.

Long ago Walter Cronkite called the *Review* the conscience of the industry. In recent years, it has been described by industry professionals as "essential," "uplifting and enlightening" and as the publication that "keeps us honest." More commonly the *Review* is referred to as the bible of journalism, and, lord knows, these days, with the rampaging reign of pseudonews and sensation and the mudslides that inevitably follow, threatening to bury us all, the industry can use this bible now more than ever.

It is difficult to measure the impact of any publication. Anecdotal, we know the impact of certain stories. Our story about the early Whitewater coverage coming from the public relations machine of the right wing knocked the daily headlines off the front pages of mainstream newspapers. Our story about the growing pressure of advertisers on magazine content alerted journalists everywhere to a growing danger and helped spur the American Society of Magazine Editors to build still stronger defenses. A story about reporters' freebies headed off a conflict of interest for one reporter, at least. Last year's story on industry money-lust has become the measure of journalistic integrity in conflict with corporate culture. In my time we have also come through the computer, digital, and new media revolutions, and we've adapted to them, even as we've covered them.

Of course, you see the many important letters to the editor from every level in the newsroom that take us to task or, as often, thank us. Behind those letters are hundreds more. And if anyone knew the long list of high-level industry owners, executives, editors, producers, correspondents, and reporters who have called me personally with not-for-publication damnation or, more than occasionally, with subversive praise, there would be adequate proof of the power and reach of the magazine.

On a personal note, I have enjoyed working with people who still take this business seriously, who still feel that journalism is a calling as well as a creative craft. The magazine has built a community and enabled me to be in contact with journalists who still care about their profession and who, without inflating the importance of what they do, are still committed to journalism's core public service mission, despite forces that are trying to diminish and derail it.

I leave the magazine to the able stewardship of Dean Tom Goldstein and new publisher David Lavenoth. They now have the formidable challenge borne by every dean since the founding of the magazine in 1961 — to find support for it, to help it survive and grow in its service to the school and the industry. Dean Barrett wrote upon his retirement: "My hope and belief is that the magazine will continue to 'deal forthrightly with what it finds to be deficient or irresponsible and to salute what it finds to be responsible, fair, and professional,'" words from the founding editorial. I second the motion, with deep gratitude for having had the opportunity to write another successful chapter in CJR's history and to serve a unique institution and voice in American and world journalism. ♦

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C

letters

SHOW THEM THE MONEY

If the latest crop of reporters is indeed worse than ever before ("Rating the Recruits," CJR, March/April), I point the finger at the current state of the business of journalism. As one editor in the survey astutely noticed, industry-wide layoffs and financial doom-saying have chased away all but the most passionate (or foolhardy) members of the best and brightest class. Who can blame a would-be reporter who rejects the cookie-cutter journalism and corporate cutbacks infecting so many newsrooms today? And what happens to the ones with promise when the rent becomes too much for a salary that stays flat, or the latest round of downsizing makes the uncertainty of free-lance work look stable?

Rob Dean, managing editor at the Santa Fe *New Mexican*, responded to your survey with a radical thought: "[Newspapers] need to be places where young people can accomplish their goals, make a living, serve their communities — and have a voice in their paper." Call it the "Field of Dreams" approach. Build it and they will come.

KATIE RYAN, age 27

Staff writer, *The Times Herald-Record*
Middletown, New York

I am a 1998 journalism graduate who just left newspaper work — hopefully forever — for a job in another field. The thing I could never understand about journalism is that I, as a journalist, was supposed to love the profession so much that I would forgo family, friends, and personal needs to slave for the paper — and to do it for less money than the average fast-food store manager makes. Money wasn't supposed to matter — I wasn't in journalism for the money, right? But papers are owned by big companies watching the bottom line, cutting salaries, withholding raises, raking in profits of up to 25 percent. I'm not supposed to be in it for the money,

but the ownership groups are sure as hell in it for the money.

AMY ELROD

Albuquerque, New Mexico

TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT

The ambivalence toward Steve Wasserman's high ambitions for the *L.A. Times*



Book Review (CJR, March/April) illustrates a conundrum of contemporary newspapering. So often journalists are suspicious of efforts to satisfy the intellectual appetites of our brightest and most engaged readers. Yet we are baffled when so many of those same readers allow subscriptions to lapse because they can find nothing to engage them in their daily newspaper.

ROBERT LEE HOTZ

Science writer, *Los Angeles Times*
Los Angeles, California

ALTERNATIVE VIEWS

As one who has spent more than half of the last thirty years editing alternative papers, I would challenge Kevin McAuliffe's assertion that "So far, the growth of the chains — and the shootout between them — have done no harm to alternative journalism" (CJR, March/April). The current crop of alternative papers may be serviceable and relevant, but few could be described as idiosyncratic, experimental, passionate, or rambunctious — the hallmarks of the past papers I've known and loved.

DAN ROTTENBERG

Former editor, *Philadelphia Forum*
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

In the alternative *San Antonio Current* investigative reporter Debbie Nathan took the first real look at a multimillionaire who not only has bankrolled the campaigns of a very conservative, pro-corporate state Supreme Court, but also has bought himself several statewide office holders as well as a large number of legislators. This article has, in effect,

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the *Express-News*, to finally write about this manipulator of public process.

With most major cities being one-daily-newspaper towns, a good, aggressive weekly alternative is the only hope the public has.

CORINNE SABO
San Antonio, Texas

Kevin McAuliffe's "Alternative Story: The Battle in New York" contains a number of errors concerning the union at *The Village Voice*.

McAuliffe writes: "There is even labor peace on the horizon after recent settlements with [the *Voice*'] unions." First, there is only one union at the *Voice* — UAW Local 2110, Technical, Office, and Professional — which represents virtually all non-managerial employees. Second, our last three-year contract with the *Voice* was signed in July of 1996 — not "recent" by the time frame in which these things are measured — and there is no more likelihood of "labor peace" when negotiations for a new contract begin in June than there ever was. Third, writers at the *Voice* are hardly "locked in by the union." Our current contract affords scant protection to writers, who can (and have) been peremptorily dismissed by management. We may want to address this issue in upcoming negotiations.

JAMES CREEGAN
Shop steward, *Village Voice Classified*
New York, New York

NO UNDUE INFLUENCE

I was an assistant city editor of *The Daily Progress* in Charlottesville, Virginia, during the baby-swap coverage, at which you recently lobbed a Dart (CJR, March/April).

I acknowledge that *USA Today* and *The Washington Post* scooped the *Progress* (circulation 31,000, starting reporter's salary about \$18,000) on some stories from the University of Virginia Medical Center. I wasn't happy about that and staffers perhaps recall my tirades on the subject. But it is a mere conspiracy theory to suggest that we buried or downplayed news because of the awkward fact that editor Wayne Mogielnicki is married to Medical Center spokeswoman Marguerite Beck.

Neither Mogielnicki nor anyone else tried explicitly or implicitly to influence the work of line editors and reporters on this story. Under Mogielnicki, the *Progress* has unhesitatingly printed sto-

ries embarrassing to the University of Virginia, the medical center, its associated health maintenance organization, and even the newspaper itself. He is an honorable man and a good editor.

STEPHEN MERELMAN
The Daily Progress
Charlotte, Virginia

NATURAL RESOURCES

The Dart citation of my book, *One of Ours: Timothy McVeigh and the Oklahoma City Bombing*, has all the earmarks of poor reporting that CJR customarily accuses others of. Without apparently reviewing and comparing my book with Brandon Stickney's *All American Monster: The Unauthorized Biography of Timothy McVeigh*, CJR accuses me of plagiarism. Had a review been conducted, CJR would have observed that, what few similarities there are, they are all factual details from McVeigh's early life. Of course, those details are going to be the same and, of course, the chronology of events will be the same — that is what, in fact, happened. No biographer or reporter has a monopoly on the facts.

Every author I know necessarily relies to some extent on prior reporting by others about facts and events. Stickney's *All American Monster*, was just one of the many published sources which I, like any author, reviewed. These secondary

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If you'd like us to consider your letter for publication, please include your full name, street address, and telephone number. Letters are, of course, subject to editing for clarity and space.

sources were in addition to my own independent reporting, which included nearly three years of coverage of the McVeigh case since the day of the bombing.

My only regret is that I looked to *All American Monster* for a few of the facts about McVeigh's early life. Stickney's error about the name of the movie caused me to include this minor error in my book as well.

RICHARD A. SERRANO
Washington, D.C.

The editors reply: The Dart was based on a thorough comparison of the two books. Similarities included not only facts and chronology (and minor errors), but also peculiar words, verbatim phrases, and extraordinarily close paraphrases.

MOVING STORY

In "Going Nativist" (CJR, January/February), Joel Millman sharply criticizes my article on the fears of immigrants that have led some native-born Americans to move from cities with high levels of immigration to those with lower levels. Unfortunately, Millman chose to quote selectively from the article, to ignore information and quotations that provided a balanced context.

While Millman may dislike the feelings and views of those native-born Americans who have chosen to move, it would be the height of journalistic irresponsibility not to report why they said they had moved. While I might sympathize with Millman's personal views on immigration, as an immigrant myself I think it more important to understand the actual effects of immigration, good and bad.

ELSA C. ARNETT
National reporter, Knight Ridder
Washington, D.C.

My former colleague Joel Millman chides *USA Today's* Susan Page for reporting my "flat opinion" that the post-1965 immigrant wave has not benefited Americans economically. But Page knew this is actually the "flat opinion" of the National Research Council's 1997 report *The New Americans*. The NRC reviewed the same technical literature that I did in my 1995 book *Alien Nation* and reached the same conclusion: (1) the aggregate benefit to native-born Americans is nugatory (\$1-\$10 billion in a \$7 trillion economy); (2) it is more than wiped out by the \$15-20 billion fiscal loss. America, in short, is being

transformed for nothing; indeed, it is paying for the privilege.

Millman consistently uses the trick of describing critics of immigration as "anti-immigrant" — particularly ironic in my case because I am an immigrant myself. Since he also makes the usual insinuation that we are nativists, racists, bigots, etc., perhaps I might be permitted an observation on his own emotional state, shared with so many in the national media: a passionate and unprincipled drive to transform America, amounting in the last analysis to a species of treason.

PETER BRIMELOW
Senior editor, *Forbes*
New Preston, Connecticut

MISSING MILESTONE

Your cover story "What a Century!" (CJR, January/February) was magnificent, a brilliant survey of journalism over one hundred years. However, to me there was an unforgivable omission — newsletters. Investment newsletters came on the scene as early as 1902. The first Washington newsletter was founded during World War I. And there are now 5,000 subscription newsletters covering almost every subject.

Newsletterers are recognized as journalists by the National Press Club, three of whose recent presidents are newsletterers, and the Society of Professional Journalists, whose recent president was with a Washington newsletter. Every year the Newsletter Publishers Association joins with the National Press Club in an awards program for newsletters. And newsletters are regularly admitted to the Congressional Periodical Press Galleries.

HOWARD PENN HUDSON
Editor, *Newsletter on Newsletters*
Rhinebeck, New York

BETTER THAN O.K.

Oh, come now, if *The Daily Oklahoman* is so awful ("The Worst Newspaper in America," CJR, January/February), how does one explain that it has the thirteenth best market penetration in America, with a very healthy 220,000 daily circulation and an even better 300,000 Sunday count? Maybe because it's earned the respect and admiration of its readers? You know, the poor, uneducated, and easy-to-command types.

L. BRENT BOZELL III
Chairman, Media Research Center
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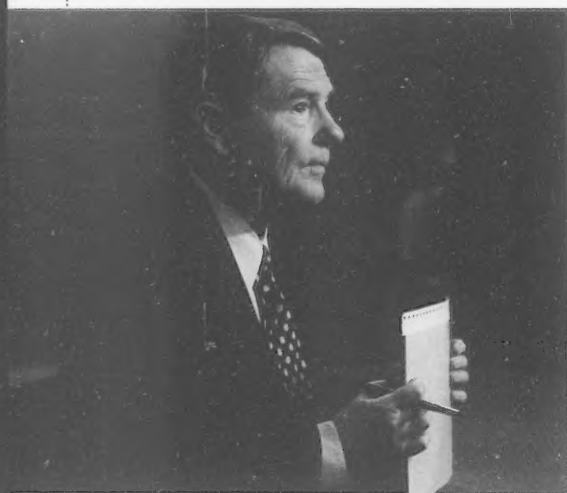
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TELEVISION

PUBLIC AFFAIRS AT PBS: THE PRESSURE IS ON

Do High Ratings and Citizenship Mix?



Programmers want "engagingness" from Jim Lehrer's *NewsHour*

Change doesn't come easily to public TV, as the little war over *Washington Week in Review* demonstrates.

When public TV station WETA in Washington suggested last February it might liven up *Washington Week in Review*, the serious and steady PBS news roundtable, things got livelier than management had in mind. Moderator Ken Bode, 59, crossed swords with the station's new program director, and Bode and his producer were soon gone. That, in turn, offended reporter regulars on the show. More than a thousand loyal viewers, fearful that substance might be sacrificed, complained. In the end, WETA was so eager to demonstrate that it was not

in favor of drastic change that it hauled former moderator Paul Duke, 72, out of retirement to host for several calming months.

Washington Week, the first public affairs show on public TV, has changed very little in its thirty-two years. Its small but vocal audience clearly sees that as a plus. But within public TV circles, complaints about it have circulated for years. WETA's executives may have been portrayed in some press accounts as Visigoths come to sack civilization, but they are not the only ones in the system who think PBS has a problem with its public affairs lineup.

All the public affairs staples on PBS — even *The NewsHour* with Jim Lehrer, one of PBS's crown jewels — face pressure to seek a younger and larger audience. With the proliferation of news programs on commercial networks and cable services, the audience for public affairs has fragmented, challenging PBS and its member stations to find new ways to distinguish their service.

"There's a general feeling that the public affairs lineup has not changed much in twenty years," says Fred Esplin, general manager of KUED in Salt Lake and former chairman of the PBS board's program policy committee. "A lot has changed in the television world and we, for the most part, haven't."

The debate about the vitality of public

affairs on PBS began in the mid-'90s, and has resulted in some small changes. Yet many station executives, particularly the younger and more ratings-conscious programmers, complain that the so-called "W's" — *Washington Week* and *Wall Street Week*, which lead PBS's Friday night lineup — drag down their efforts to build viewership. Public TV insiders like to say that the debate isn't about ratings, but declining audiences in the past few years have certainly propelled the discussion.

In the early 1990s, the "W's" were each drawing a solid average national Nielsen rating of 2.2 — on a par with PBS's average prime-time rating. But in 1995-96 the average dropped 23 percent, to 1.7, which translated to 1.6 million television households. *Wall Street's* audience has held steady since then, according to an analysis by PBS Research, but *Washington Week* has dipped further, to 1.6. *The NewsHour*, which had a rating of 2.0 as recently as '92-93, also has experienced drops over the past three seasons. In 1995-96, its national audience averaged 1.5; in 1997-98, 1.2.

Meanwhile, the public affairs audience is aging. Fully 75 percent of the W's viewers were fifty or older in 1997-98, according to PBS Research. This mature set made up 56 percent of *The NewsHour's* audience. Dan Werner, president of MacNeil/Lehrer Productions, points out that nightly newscasts on the commercial networks have lost more viewers than *The NewsHour*. "We're holding our own in a declining environment," he says. But in percentage terms, *The NewsHour* has seen a sharper drop than the three newscasts (see chart).

Nonetheless, PBS and its stations are struggling with the question of how to begin to open up public affairs to a larger and younger audience. Separate but converging initiatives have helped bring the question into sharper focus.

In 1996, the Public Television Programmers Association, formed in part to represent the station programmers' interests,

conducted systematic evaluations of PBS's public affairs line-up. The critiques faulted both W's and *The NewsHour* for lacking a quality that the programmers dubbed "engagingness." (*Frontline*, the much-praised documentary series, was found to be more engaging.)

Meanwhile, within PBS, journalist/scholar Ellen Hume led the Democracy Project, a major in-house effort from 1996-98 to develop new approaches to public affairs. In 1996 the project developed *PBS Debate Night*, an election special that paired a debate between leaders of Congress with locally produced face-offs between hometown candidates. But Hume's efforts to develop a regularly scheduled program never got off the ground, partly because of a lack of enthusiasm from the public TV stations.

Public affairs, Hume says, isn't likely to meet programmers' expectations for ratings: "They're frustrated because it doesn't bring in huge audiences like *Nova*, *Nature*, and the *Antiques Road Show*. News and public affairs will never have that role." (Hume left PBS last June when her husband, diplomat

John Shattuck, was appointed U.S. ambassador to the Czech Republic.)

Then, late last fall, the PBS board's program policy committee joined the push to revitalize news and public affairs shows — but with a twist. The committee called not just for a more modern feel but for a "larger and more coordinated approach" to public affairs programming to "significantly strengthen" the "citizenship" part of the PBS mission.

Tom Howe, chairman of the committee and the director of North Carolina's public TV network, concedes that there is increased competition for much of PBS's fare — from nature programs to high drama to children's shows — and a greatly increased volume of news on commercial and cable outlets. But, he says, "there is little competition for the niche of genuinely trying to create a more informed citizenry."

In response, early this year PBS began developing strategies to beef up its offerings, including the possibility of local news inserts into *The NewsHour*. The *NewsHour*'s Werner is also trying to develop a late-night "hard news" program on PBS,

and hopes to enlist *The New York Times*, WNET in New York, and WETA as production partners. (A similar idea was floated in 1995, in partnership with *The Wall Street Journal*, but it foundered after a main funder demanded thirty-second spots — too close to a commercial for PBS.)

Werner says changes at *The NewsHour* are not in response to ratings problems or PBS pressures. The program is changing and doing new things, he says, "because they're important things to do to serve our audience better."

Should ratings matter? Tom Holter, program director of KTCA in Twin Cities, a station with a strong local news presence, says that station programmers like himself use ratings as indicators of how relevant and useful people find a show. An effective public affairs program gives viewers "a better understanding of the world they live in," he says. "That might translate into a larger audience if more people are finding that the programs have more relevance to their lives."

In Tucson, where *Washington Week* has lost audience over the past few years for KAET-TV, Joe Campbell, program manager, admits his concern. "It's a signature program," he says, "and we should be giving them a signature program they want to watch."

—Karen Bedford
Bedford covers public television for *Current*, a biweekly newspaper about public broadcasting based in Washington, D.C.

Losing Ground			
Nightly News Shows	Average Nielsen Rating		% Change
	'95-96	'97-98	
ABC	9.2	7.9	-14%
CBS	7.5	7.8	+3.9%
NBC	8.4	8.3	-1.2%
PBS	1.5	1.2	-20%

In terms of percentages, average Nielsen ratings fell more for PBS's *NewsHour* between the 95-96 and 97-98 seasons than they did for three commercial nightly newscasts. One ratings point translates to just under a million households.

RICHARD SHEN

MAGAZINES

MAINSTREAMING REASON

How a Libertarian Magazine Elbows Its Way to the Table

Virginia Postrel, the editor of *Reason* magazine, swears she doesn't flinch when she hears the words "government regulation." The concept, she insists, is too broad "to cause a visceral reaction," even in a gut-level libertarian like herself. The things that do get her worked up tend to be more specific, she says. Things like sexual harassment law ("It's appalling"), Al Gore and the smart-growth movement ("They lie"), and laser pointers.

Laser pointers?

"When I read that cities were trying to ban laser pointers I got outraged," Postrel

says. "First, I think they're fun, and that fun counts for something. Second, I think the immediate impulse to control bad behavior by banning the source of that fun is a bad one. Why do people have to be so obnoxiously coercive?"

In the world of U.S. opinion magazines, *Reason* has always been something of a curiosity. Put aside, for a moment, its libertarian take, summed up by its motto "Free Minds and Free Markets." Its genesis — the magazine was founded in 1968 by MIT engineering student Robert Poole Jr. — gave *Reason* a somewhat geeky legacy that has been difficult to shake.



Editor Virginia Postrel outside her office in L.A.

Reason marched its libertarian philosophy somewhat to the right, while its chief libertarian competitor, *Inquiry*, which folded in the mid-'80s, leaned left, arguing for cuts in defense spending and the like. Infrastructure privatization — let business run the prisons, the schools, etc. — has always been a big theme in *Reason's* pages, but it was flogged to death in the early years. Throw in *Reason's* permanent campaign on behalf of drug decriminalization and it's easy to see why critics found the magazine easy to dismiss.

But in the ten years since Postrel, a former *Wall Street Journal* technology reporter, assumed editorial control of the magazine, *Reason* has elbowed its way into The Discussion. It hasn't lost its eccentricity entirely — in the March issue, Washington editor Michael Lynch writes how happy he was during a recent road trip "to see a mother clutching her baby close to her chest, with a lit cigarette dangling over the baby's head." But on some topics, like the privatization of social security, *Reason* and its readers are clearly helping shape the national debate.

Part of this is Postrel's doing. Under her stewardship, *Reason* has been selected three times as a finalist for a National Magazine Award and its stable of occasional contributors now includes such respectables as John Tierney of *The New York Times*, Joel Kotkin of *Inc.*, and Glenn Garvin of *The Miami Herald*. Postrel's background and passionate defense of enterprise gives the magazine some cachet with the Silicon Valley crowd, which has libertarian tendencies anyway. Concerns about government power and state paternalism remain important themes in almost every issue of the magazine. But Postrel has also infused *Reason* with a sense of fun, opening its pages to giddy defenses of popular culture and consumerism, as well as arch debunkings of received wisdom about everything from gulf war syndrome to new urbanism.

"One of the differences between me and my predecessor is that I have always considered *Reason* a mainstream magazine,"

Postrel says. "It has a certain point of view, which is a minority point of view, but it is written by and for people who have normal lives. We admit we watch television."

It can also be smart. In a memorable 1994 piece, Edith Efron presented a devastating 40,000-word psychological portrait of Bill Clinton that, five years later, seems on target.

More recently, senior editor Nick Gillespie celebrated — celebrated! — the proliferation of cable networks and the popularity of VCRs as signs of a culture boom.

Reason claims 50,000 subscribers (circulation is not audited), half the circulation of *The Nation* but up from 40,000 four years ago. Like a

In the book, Postrel divides the world into two opposing camps — dynamists, the good guys who embrace open-ended trial and error, and stasists, the bad guys who oppose any change that doesn't come top down, from some central authority. It's a worldview that permeates *Reason's* pages and bothers observers like Katrina vanden Heuvel, editor of *The Nation*.

"I think what Postrel offers is a simplistic template into which she wants to squeeze her concepts," vanden Heuvel says. "I would agree that left and right don't capture the world we live in. But I think the key issue of this period — and one she seems to ignore — is the need for a debate over the balance between public and private power in our society. And she seems to trash the government without conceding that there's a role for it to play."

Postrel believes exhaustion with the major political parties gives the libertarian movement — and her magazine — a chance to break through. "As things don't work, people begin to look for alternatives, and that includes libertarian alternatives."

—James Kelleher

Kelleher is a writer based in San Diego.



Two recent *Reasons* and editor Postrel's book

lot of its rivals in the opinion world, *Reason* doesn't come close to supporting itself, and half its expenses are covered by a foundation run by Poole, the magazine's founder. Almost 90 percent of *Reason's* readers are men, according to a subscriber survey. "It is such a strange statistic," Postrel concedes. "But I edit the magazine to be what it is."

One of the challenges she faces each month is working with an editorial staff strewn across the country. Postrel and two other editors work out of the magazine's L.A. office, but its three senior editors live in Washington, D.C., New York, and Huntsville, Texas. Coordinating copy and ideas isn't easy, Postrel concedes. "We haven't entirely conquered the communication problems."

The other big challenge is gaining visibility. Here Postrel is aggressively prolific. She writes a column for *Forbes* and *Forbes ASAP*, and she and staff members regularly write op-eds for such publications as *The Washington Post* and the *Los Angeles Times*. A gushing admirer of the Internet, she has put together a home page (www.reason.com) with multiple links, including one promoting her new book, *The Future and Its Enemies* (The Free Press, 1998).

FOLLOW-UP

MORE BAD BANANA

A Burned Source Reaches for a Shield Law

Facing jail time, and with no newspaper behind him, Mike Gallagher has taken one more step on his journey from respected investigative reporter to journalistic pariah.

A year ago, on May 3, came CHIQUITA SECRETS REVEALED, his eighteen-page investigative report in the *Cincinnati Enquirer* on wrongdoing in Central America by one of Cincinnati's most powerful corporations, Chiquita Brands International. Along with conventional reporting, the package was studded with information gleaned from internal voice-mail messages that the story claimed had been provided by a "high-level"

Chiquita employee." Then, on July 2, convinced that lead reporter Gallagher had actually recorded the voice-mails himself and lied about his methods, the *Enquirer* ran a front-page apology to Chiquita. Gannett, the *Enquirer's* owner, sweetened the sentiment by paying at least \$10 million to Chiquita. Gallagher was fired, and his readers were left to their own devices in figuring out just what parts of the big exposé — the bribery, the evasion of local land laws, the bullying of a workforce — were true. In short, a journalistic mess.



Mike Gallagher

Now, a bigger mess. Gallagher, after testifying before a grand jury investigating the voice-mail break-ins, pleaded guilty on September 24 to two felony charges of voice-mail theft. In exchange for the promise of a reduced sentence, he agreed to give a "full, truthful and complete disclosure as to all 'sources' and their activities."

Eyes now focus on a Salt Lake City lawyer, George Ventura, 37, whom Gallagher has identified as one of those sources. Ventura, a counsel for Chiquita in Honduras from 1991 to 1996, was indicted on ten charges of voice-mail theft a week before the former reporter's guilty plea. Prosecutors say he's the man who told Gallagher's Chiquita co-author, Cameron McWhirter, how to gain access to Chiquita's voice-mail system, in a phone conversation recorded by the reporters at the *Enquirer* on October 11, 1997.

Ventura's defense attorney, Marc Mezibov, won't concede that his client — who faces up to twelve and a half years in prison — is the voice on the tape. But if Ventura is the source, Mezibov is hopeful that a novel interpretation of Ohio's shield law will save his client's skin.

Shield laws generally protect reporters from releasing the names of sources. Mezibov reasons these laws are also meant to ensure that the public remains well informed. So in motions filed with the Hamilton County Court of Common Pleas, he argues that conviction of the source would create a "chilling effect" on future investigative reporting. The law, he contends, should cover informants as well, particularly informants who were assured protection by reporters. "A reporter should not have more legal pro-

tection than his source," Mezibov says.

But Ohio's aging shield law says nothing about protecting sources once they've been identified. Prosecutor Daniel Breyer sees the case as a criminal matter, not a First Amendment issue. "The promise of anonymity is no more effective than if I say to you, 'Hey, steal something for me and I won't rat you out,' and then I did," Breyer says.

Even Jane Kirtley, executive director of the Reporters' Committee for Freedom of the Press, in Arlington, Virginia, has doubts about the shield law defense. "I don't know of any shield law to protect sources from criminal law. To me, it's a surprising assertion," she says. "I don't see a legal precedent for this."

Mezibov said he was also "considering



George Ventura, left, at a pre-trial hearing with lawyer Marc Mezibov

a contract law defense," centering on a broken promise of anonymity. In 1991's *Cohen vs. Cowles Media Company*, the U.S. Supreme Court ordered the Minneapolis *Star-Tribune* and *The St. Paul Pioneer Press* to pay a source, one who had been promised anonymity but was subsequently exposed, \$200,000 for breach of contract.

Why did Gallagher burn Ventura? According to his lawyer, Patrick Hanley, any promise of anonymity is, from a legal standpoint, a false statement. "I don't think most reporters are aware of what the statutes really are," he says. "When prosecutors get more aggressive, everyone has to talk."

Gallagher, of course, had special incentive. Protecting his sources might have brought him the same charges Ventura faces — or worse — and a lawsuit from Chiquita is still looming. (McWhirter, now at the *Detroit News*, signed a less-sweeping cooperation deal with prosecutors and steadfastly refuses to name names. "I have not and will not name any sources," he says. "I did not hand over any material to the prosecutors — not a scrap of paper, not anything.")

Whether or not Gallagher has named all his tipsters remains to be seen. He reportedly destroyed some tapes, but in taped conversations turned over to the grand jury, the former reporter claims to have "others within Chiquita" assisting him. Mezibov wants their names, arguing that possibly one of them — not Ventura — committed the crime of which Ventura stands accused.

When Gallagher is eventually sentenced, the judge handling his case will consider letters from friends and relatives that say he was driven by the urge to stand up to injustice when he broke the law. "I believe his emotions overtook his judgment," his sister Colleen wrote.

Ventura's trial was set to begin on April 19. Gallagher is expected to testify in it, against a source he once promised to protect.

—Brian Lyman

Lyman is an intern for CJR.

LANGUAGE CORNER:

IT TAKES TEN, ROUGHLY

The word "decimate" literally means to reduce by a tenth, from the legendary Roman practice of killing every tenth man in a mutinous or otherwise dicey military outfit on the ground that at all costs, discipline must be maintained. The word has come to mean to destroy, put out of action or seriously damage a large part of a body of people or things. "The U.S. fleet had been decimated at Pearl Harbor" works, as does "the tree-chomping beetles that decimated Greenpoint, Brooklyn, two years ago." But it seemed a real stretch when an eloquent elder statesman said the scandal of our times had "decimated" the president's family, which numbered three. How, then, account for the review that said a performance let a play's audience walk "right into the mind of its decimated hero"? Applying "decimate" to an individual person or thing is more than a stretch. It makes meaningless a word with a clear and honorable pedigree.

—Evan Jenkins

For more on the language — and specifically, more on the fascinating question of who/whom that appeared in our last issue — see *CJR's* Web site at www.cjr.org.

INSIDE STORIES

Life on the Prison Beat

Covering prisons isn't considered a beat to die for. Reporters have a hard time making inroads into a closed world. Editors and publishers wonder if covering its growing but marginal population (1.3 million men and women in state and federal prisons as of June 1998) is really the best use of staff time. Many readers say they don't want to know about criminals anyway. Consequently, most newspapers have all but given up covering prisons.

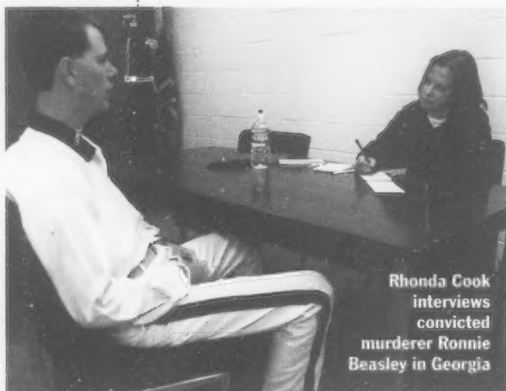
Yet a small group of reporters keeps finding stories behind bars. From the economics of the prison business to the thoughts of a death row inmate to an exposé of corruption or rape — these stories take time and consistent effort to reel in. But they are often compelling and significant.

One of the best on this beat is Rhonda Cook, forty-three, who has been covering prisons on and off for twenty years. After working twice for UPI, and at the *Austin American-Statesman* and the now-defunct *Guinnett Daily News* in Georgia, she was hired by the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* in 1989 to report primarily on Georgia's state prisons. Peg Tyre, a Brooklyn-based writer who has covered criminal justice issues for CNN and *New York Newsday*, interviewed her about the beat.

Prisons are increasingly closed off to the press. How do you get stories?

Most of the time, the people I'm writing about have to get word out through their families. Under a past state prison commissioner my telephone number was on every inmate's calling list [pre-approved phone numbers an inmate may call]. But after I wrote a series of articles on brutal beatings, the Georgia state prison system put an electronic block on my number. It was 1996. My story described how the director of facilities for all Georgia prisons dragged an inmate across the room

by the hair while the commissioner watched. And how that set the tone for a series of bloody attacks on inmates by guards. After that, my phone calls from prison ceased, and the administration tried to cut back much of my contact with inmates. [Laughing] I used to get obscene phone calls, and I don't ever get those anymore. They say inmates can still write me, but in recent months I get fewer letters. So I have to make contact through families, through employees, and the prison guards' union. I have to count on them calling me. But all I need is one phone call.



Rhonda Cook interviews convicted murderer Ronnie Beasley in Georgia

Tell me about your favorite story or series.

I'm writing now about Two-Strikes-You're-Out inmates. I just sat down with a fellow who killed two women and he doesn't even remember their names. He makes my blood run cold. But I've also recently profiled a fellow who spent nine or ten years in the hole, in isolation. And he was an intelligent person, which makes it worse. All that time without feeling the rain or seeing the stars.

Back in 1992, I wrote a series of stories about female inmates being sexually abused in the state prison in Milledgeville. I learned the names of six of the women. I went to see them. They didn't know why I was coming. And I asked them, without warning — are you coerced to have sex with guards? Most of them just said, yes, in a completely matter-of-fact way. The officers were using the prison as their own brothel. From those interviews I realized it was so common that the women were not fazed at all by it. That kept me going. I learned that the guards would prey on emotionally and mentally defective

women. So when I met many of the victims, they were medicated and very fragile. It was exhausting to talk to them about something so personal.

I got a lot of threats, which I took seriously since one of the fellows under investigation for sexually abusing women ended up dead on the same day he talked to investigators and confessed. Eventually, the state corrections commissioner was replaced. The women were moved out of Milledgeville. Regulations were established about touching the inmates.

How do prison officials react to your stories?

I consider inmates people and I treat them that way. Some guards aren't bothered by that, but some — it kind of makes them nuts. By and large, bureaucrats in corrections think I'm out to destroy them. It's kind of a joke. They think I'm out to make a name for myself. I'm past that. I've done this for some twenty years. I don't collect clips.

How do you make your stories important to your readers?

You have to put the story in graphic terms. You also have to put it in terms of money. It's their money that is being spent — a lot of it.

How do you make your stories important to your editors?

My editors love them all. They recruited me to write these stories, and the stories are solid. They get reaction. It may be angry calls from the Department of Corrections public relations people. Talk radio picks it up. Editors see that people do read them. They don't care if people love the stories; they like angry reaction as well.

Why are fewer reporters covering prisons?

It's hard. I don't go to a meeting to get stuff. It's taken me a long time to develop the phone numbers I have. Before I came to the *Journal-Constitution*, the paper went through four good reporters on this beat — one after another. I think that once an editor gets a reporter inside, the reporter and the editor — together — will get a lot of great stories. The largest prison systems — California, Texas, and Florida — those systems aren't covered. Frank Green of the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* and I should have some competition out there. But we don't, and it makes me sad.

Criminals have become faceless human beings. Somewhere they went a different way than they rest of us. We have to take a look at that in human terms. Reporters have to be willing to do this. ■

Making it 87 Pulitzers for Times Mirror- and Washington Post-owned newspapers



The Washington Post won the public service award for its series on the reckless use of firearms by city police.



The beat reporting Pulitzer went to Chuck Philips and Michael A. Hiltzik of the Los Angeles Times for stories disclosing corruption in the entertainment industry.



Coverage of a shooting rampage in which a lottery worker killed four supervisors and himself earned the breaking news reporting prize for The Hartford Courant.

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CJRworld

THE BALTICS

A YOUNG PRESS CORPS

Journalism in the Baltic nations — Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania — is struggling hard to shuck off the horrors of a half-century of Soviet oppression, coercion, and censorship. So far — eight years after independence — the results are depressingly mixed. Scores of new publications are thrashing about to attract readers in the giddy new atmosphere of freedom — but only a handful of journalists know how a robust free press is supposed to operate. In Estonia's capital city of Tallinn, 29-year-old Marko Mihkelson, editor-in-chief of *Postimees*, the country's most successful daily, laments: "If we put all the journalists in this country together, we'd have enough for one excellent newspaper."

One hundred eighty miles to the south in Riga, capital of Latvia, 35-year-old, American-born, Harvard-educated Paul Rausteps, managing editor of *Diena*, Latvia's dominant daily, worries that the country's journalists "are still not professionals." They have "the objectivity of a parrot," retailing quotes "from whoever is giving a press conference" with no effort to provide context — because the reporters themselves don't understand the issues. Another nagging problem: some owners and editors have taken pay-offs from companies for favorable stories.

At *The Baltic Times*, an English-language weekly with offices in all three capitals (including Vilnius, Lithuania), New Jersey-born (two years on *The Bergen Record*), 26-year-old Steven Johnson believes that since the "awakening" from Soviet dictatorship, most people "don't even know what the role of a newspaper is."

The Baltic press corps is probably the world's youngest. A recent round of visits to leading newspapers and magazines found newsrooms filled with twentysomethings, most of them eager but sadly mis-cast. Few journalists who thrived during the Soviet period, when all publications



Paul Rausteps, top, an American, edits Latvia's leading daily, *Diena*. Marko Mihkelson runs Estonia's dominant paper, *Postimees*.



were state-owned and controlled by the Communist party, have made the transition gracefully from those bad old days — nor have they been asked to.

Readership is down sharply since independence, even as journals have proliferated wildly and competition grows ever more fierce. That's because newspapers and magazines were much cheaper under the Soviets, thanks to state subsidized paper and printing costs; and because many wage earners now average as little as \$300 a month and can't afford to buy many publications.

Reporters and editors are simply "hired off the street," says Inta Brikse, head of the University of Latvia's journalism department. Still, they're paid a premium wage because too many news orga-

nizations are chasing too few potential staffers. It's a sellers' market — which helps explain why young Americans like Rausteps and Johnson are in top editorial jobs. "I was an actor with no news experience," Rausteps admits, "but I knew a little more than anybody here." Johnson was traveling in Europe looking for editorial work and was "hired on the spot" when he applied at *The Baltic Times*.

Tough investigative reporting, killed under the Soviets, is still virtually nonexistent. No Freedom of Information laws help reporters acquire official documents. Says Tarmu Tammerk, managing director of the Estonian Newspaper Association: "Bureaucrats simply tell journalists, 'Where is it written that I must give you this information?'" The association is working to draft western-style FOI rules.

Peculiarly, news media in the Baltics rank among the institutions the public trusts most, despite the generally low level of talent. In one recent mini-scandal, the Russian-language paper *Respublica* printed an "exclusive" interview with NATO secretary general Javier Solana, replete with extended quotations. Solana denied ever giving the interview. The reporter confessed he'd culled Solana's words from old press conferences.

All three Baltic nations have large Russian populations — farm and factory workers, and Russian troops and their families who came there during the post-World War II forced "Russification" programs. (Latvia's 2.4 million people, for example, include 720,000 Russians.) Most of those are unintegrated into their Baltic hosts' cultures and require their own Russian language publications, of which there are dozens.

In January, Latvia's *Diena* began producing a Russian-language spin-off with content drawn from its own pages. Its 33-year-old editor, Anna Stroja, says that papers owned by Russians are "primitive" by Baltic standards. "They propagandize. They don't separate fact from fiction. It's a very big problem."

In Estonia, many of the leading publications are foreign-owned. Schibsted, the Norwegian conglomerate, owns *Postimees* and a string of other papers and magazines,

including *Luup*, a *Time* look-alike. Bonnier, the Swedish media corporation, is heavily invested in a competing chain, which includes the lively, large-format news-magazine *Eesti Ekspress* and the second largest daily, *Eesti Päevaleht*. Do those foreign owners interfere in editorial affairs? "Absolutely not!" says *Postimees*'s Mihkelson. "We are independent politically. The owners don't order us to write about Norwegian skiers or Norwegian salmon."

The struggle to forge a strong new journalistic tradition in the Baltics probably will require another five to ten years, says a Latvian diplomat. "But we're going to get there. We have the will. It's a journey we absolutely must make."

—Neil Hickey

Hickey is CJR's editor at large.

COLOMBIA

FRONT-LINE JOURNALISM

On February 22, 1998, several men forced sports reporter Oscar García Calderón into a taxi, shot him three times in the head and neck, and dumped his body outside the national attorney general's office in downtown Bogotá. On April 16, a gunman shot radio reporter Nelson Carvajal Carvajal outside an elementary school where he taught in the small town of Pitalito. On May 19, a hit man murdered popular television reporter Bernabé Cortés Jiménez as he was getting out of taxi in Cali. On August 11, a gunman on a motorcycle approached former TV reporter Amparo Leonor Jiménez Pallares after she dropped her son off at school and killed her with several shots to the head.

These are the four journalists murdered for their work in Colombia during 1998, more than in any other country in the world according to Attacks on the Press in 1998, the Committee to Protect Journalists' worldwide survey of press freedom. The powerful drug cartels have long targeted Colombian reporters (43 killed there in the last decade, second only to Algeria with 58), but the nature of the violence has changed in recent years as civil war and social strife have intensified. Now threatened by guerrillas, paramilitary groups, rogue elements in the military, local political bosses, and com-

mon criminals, Colombian journalists recall the simpler days when their drug cartels were their primary enemy.

The deteriorating fortunes of the two most powerful drug cartels have not reduced violence against the press. In fact, it may have contributed to an escalation. Factions in the ongoing civil war have filled the vacuum left by the decline of the cartels by moving into the drug trade. While Colombia's two largest guerrilla groups — the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN) — have long acknowledged providing protection for local coca farmers and "taxing" the middlemen who buy the crop, recent press reports (including a story by Bernabé Cortés, one of the murdered journalists) suggest that the guerrillas are now providing protection for major drug traffickers. Meanwhile, Colombia's right-wing paramilitary gangs, originally created and backed by the Colombian military as part of its counterinsurgency campaign, have become increasingly autonomous and organized as they have begun to finance themselves through drug trafficking. Paramilitary leader Carlos Castaño is believed to be working with former members of the Medellín cartel and is said to control vast coca plantations.



Bernabé Cortés Jiménez: murdered in Cali

Destabilized by the burgeoning civil war and weighed down by corruption, the federal government's power has eroded to the point that it now controls only the major cities. In the drug-producing regions, smaller, more decentralized trafficking organizations that are harder to control have replaced the larger cartels. Knowing that less than 1 percent of the 20,000 murders in Colombia were prosecuted last year, local political

bosses in other parts of the country use violence to maintain power.

The murders of the four journalists in 1998 tell of the complex threats facing the Colombian press, long one of the most aggressive and professional in Latin America. On January 5, Colombian police arrested the ex-mayor and two local politicians in Pitalito on charges of ordering the murder of Nelson Carvajal Carvajal because he exposed their corrupt practices on his radio show. Meanwhile, Oscar García Calderón's colleagues at *El Espectador* are convinced the journalist was murdered because he was planning to inform the attorney general's office about how traffickers were using bullfighting (a major sport in Colombia) to launder their proceeds.

The attorney general's office, which says it is still investigating that hypothesis, has made important arrests in two other cases. In August Colombian authorities detained Libardo Humberto Prada and charged him with the murder of Amparo Leonor Jiménez Pallares in February 1998. Investigators believe Jiménez was killed because of a story she reported in 1996 about a paramilitary death squad that had murdered peasants living on a large estate owned by a government official. Armed men confiscated Jiménez's videotape as she was returning from that reporting trip.

Last November authorities detained Julio César Ospina Chavarro for the murder of TV newsman Cortés. An informant said that Ospina had been hired by drug traffickers in the nearby town of Corinto to kill Cortés; they were angered by a report broadcast in July 1997, suggesting that FARC guerrillas were providing protection for local traffickers.

While the arrests are significant, they have done little to alleviate the sense among many Colombian journalists that armed factions in the country are using violence to limit public debate in an even more insidious and dangerous way than the cartels. In December, paramilitary leader Carlos Castaño sent a personal letter to *El Espectador* columnist Alfredo Molano calling him a guerrilla propagandist and warning him that he would be killed. "There is a clear relationship between drug trafficking and the war," said Molano in January, just before the threats forced him to leave for exile in Spain. "But that's not something the press can write about in Colombia."

—Joel Simon

Simon is Americas program coordinator for the Committee to Protect Journalists.

AP/WIDEWORLD/CONVULSION ITALY

IF YOU WANT TO SEE SOMETHING done, just tell some human beings it can't be done. Make it known that it's impossible to fly to the moon, or run a hundred metres in nine-point-nine seconds, or solve Fermat's Last Theorem. Remind the world that no one has ever hit sixty-two home runs in a season. Stuffed eighteen people into a Volkswagen Bug. Set half the world free. Or cloned a sheep. Dangle the undoable in front of the world. Then, consider it done.

HUMAN ACHIEVEMENT



darts & laurels

◆ **DART** to the TCI cable channel in Billings, Montana, for pulling the wool over its viewers' eyes. Twice an hour, TCI breaks into CNN Headline News with "Legislative Update," billed as "Montana's most comprehensive coverage of legislative developments from your state Capitol." But at no time before, during, or after the four-minute purported news segment does TCI disclose the fact that the program's stand-up host, "correspondent" Bob Gilbert, is a registered lobbyist for, as well as executive director of, the Montana Wool Growers Association. Indeed, as pointed out in a front-page story by the weekly *Billings Outpost*, one of the first people Gilbert featured on "Legislative Update" this session was Representative Chase Hibbard, who also happens to be the Wool Growers president and Gilbert's boss. Responding to the *Outpost's* criticism, Gilbert has stopped his practice of suggesting, both in lead-ins and sign-offs, that "Legislative Update" is a part of CNN Headline News. But he is still on the air. Still a Wool Growers lobbyist. And, judging from his published comments, not a bit sheepish about it.

◆ **LAUREL** to The Street.com and technology writer Lewis Perdue, for literally rubbing out a virtual menace. In a January 22 piece about how "discouragingly easy" it is to buy guns on the Internet, Perdue took particular aim at eBay, the online auction leader, for failing to verify that all those buyers and sellers of assault rifles and combat shotguns possess federal firearms licenses. Blasting away at the potential legal fallout for online intermediaries in illegal gun sales — and noting that gun-control efforts are making such easy shopping increasingly popular with criminals — Perdue's article hit its mark. On February 19, eBay Inc. announced that it would no longer allow listings for firearms or ammunition. "The Internet," the company acknowledged in a press release, "is not an appropriate venue" for their sale.

◆ **DART** to *The New York Times*, for bubbleheaded news judgment. The lead feature in the paper's February 7 Sunday Styles section was a 110-column-inch toast to a hot new "rage": lavish Sweet Sixteen parties at fancy restaurants, downtown lounges, and posh private clubs where the city's "most socially precocious girls," bedecked in dazzling designer outfits and beautified at swank salons, mark the "rite of onrushing adulthood." The rite typically includes, the headline suggested, "deejays, shutterbugs, and Champagne." With evident applause for such dubious

indulgence, the article concluded with a quote from one birthday baby's mother. "There's nothing wrong with midnight Champagne for sixteen-year-olds," she said blithely. "I bought as much as I could." The quote was repeated as a caption over a photo of the glass-wielding, décolletaged crowd. Another of the five accompanying photos centered on cigarettes strewn on tables, perched in ashtrays, and stuck in the party guests' hands. Coincidentally, perhaps, adjacent to the text (and less than an inch away from a reference to a gala at City Wine and Cigar Company bar) was an ad for *Cigar Aficionado* and *Wine Spectator* magazines: "The Good Life On Sale Now." (A few weeks later, the same Sunday Styles section coughed up another gratuitous feature: 1,300 words, plus four-color photo, promoting a "cigarette lounge," where the "young, chic" clientele share the joys of, as the headline had it, STEALING A SMOKE, IN GOOD COMPANY.)

◆ **DART** to *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, for discriminatory journalism. On February 17, the Southern Regional Council in Atlanta released a forty-page report, part of a three-year, state-by-state Ford Foundation-funded project, documenting widespread intentional employment discrimination in Georgia. To at least one of the state's news outlets it was worthy stuff: STUDY: GEORGIA EMPLOYERS DISCRIMINATE, bannered the *Athens Daily News's* metro section, illustrating its page-one story with a statistical chart of the worst industry violators of federal laws. Another gave it Top Story billing in electronic editions: STUDY: GEORGIA HAS MOST HIRING DISCRIMINATION IN SOUTH, reported the *Savannah Morning News*. In the *Journal-Constitution*, however, not a word about the findings has ever appeared. The state's largest and most influential paper, it seems, wants no truck at all with those less than peachy, image-bruising facts.

◆ **DART** to *The Washington Post* and food critic Phyllis C. Richman; and to the Baltimore *Sun* and political columnist, editorial writer, and deputy editorial page editor Barry Rascovar, for not going by the book. In noontime chats on her paper's Web site, Richman used readers' questions as set-ups to promote the latest edition of her book, *The Washington Post Dining Guide*. Along with details on the contents, cover, price, and signings, Richman tucked in a value-added plug for Giant supermarkets (the *Post's* most gigantic advertiser), as a place the guide could be found. For his part, Rascovar promoted his new book, *The Great Game of Maryland Politics*, which was published by

the *Sun*, with a personal appearance at an invitation-only reception for the entire membership of the state's general assembly that was hosted by a lobbyist for, among others, Atlantic Richfield, Bell Atlantic, and the Baltimore Ravens football team. As revealed by radio commentator Lester Kinsolving in an outraged report, Rascovar stood beamingly by as the lobbyist, who had bought the books in bulk, handed them out as gifts to the legislators Rascovar covers. Kinsolving also described a postcard, sent to another capitol lobbyist, that carried the Baltimore *Sun*'s logo and this handwritten message: "(Name) A great gift for clients! (Signed) Barry R."

◆ **DART** to the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, for being soft on ethics. *JAMA*'s February 10 issue presented a pre-Valentine's Day report calling attention to "an important public health concern" — namely, the prevalence of sexual problems experienced by men and women in the U.S. Based on a survey that was seven years old, the highly publicized article concluded that while "recent advances" in therapy — read Viagra, Pfizer's little blue helper in cases of erectile dysfunction — increased the quality of life for men, it was high time for researchers to consider similar therapies for women. But *JAMA* offered no heads-up to readers about an apparent conflict of interest: the article's two authors have enjoyed a richly satisfying relationship with Pfizer (a major *JAMA* advertiser) as consultants in Viagra's development. How had the journal failed to unsheath that crucial bit of information? Just "an oversight," an editor limply explained.

◆ **DART** to *Philadelphia* magazine, for keeping mum about the facts. A January article by Duane Swierczynski, "The Boys in the String Band," purported to tell of the tortured existence of a graying, fortysomething, secretly gay pipefitter who "can be himself just one day a year" — January 1, when, as a nervous member of the Mummer's Fancy Brigade, he joins that "strutting," "prancing" army of sequin-and-feather-bedecked revelers marking New Year's Day in the City of Brotherly Love. Following the pseudonymous "Neil" from dance practice to post-parade reunion with "George," his similarly closeted "friend" from a rival brigade, the report is filled with abundant detail and numerous quotes, not the least of which is attributed to "Robby," a Mummer introduced earlier as "a linebacker-size man in a flannel shirt and jeans streaked with tar." "What, do I know [Neil and George] are fags?" Robby says to the apparently dumbfounded Swierczynski in an ironic twist. "Of course I know. Everybody knows . . . You'd be surprised how many of 'em there are in the parade . . .

Look, you ain't reporting nothing new, buddy." And, it turned out, Swierczynski wasn't reporting anything true, either. As revealed by columnist Stu Bykofsky in the *Philadelphia Daily News*, the entire Mummer's piece was a hoax, commissioned by *Philadelphia* editor Eliot Kaplan in some odd attempt at humor. (In early February Kaplan was fired — for reasons, said publisher David Lipson, that had nothing to do with the hoax.)

◆ **DART** to the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, for its ungenerous spirit. In an April 7 story on the Honolulu Publishers Association's annual awards in twenty-two categories, the paper mentioned only the ten categories in which it placed. And in the accompanying list of those first-, second-, and third-place winners in those ten particular categories, the paper included details — names of individual staff members, subject matter covered — only for *Star-Bulletin* entries. To cite just one example: readers interested in the Feature Photography in Black and White category learned that the *Star-Bulletin*'s Ken Sakamoto's work, "Triumph over Tragedy," about "shark victim Michael Coots' rehabilitation a year after losing right foot in shark attack," had taken second place; about the first place award, however, they learned only that it had gone to *Maui News*. Period.

◆ **LAUREL** to *Newsday*, and staff correspondent Stephanie Saul, for an original study in black and white. In a 17,000-word series (December 13-20), Saul reconstructed seven long-forgotten cases from the 1960s South in which blacks had met horrible deaths at the hands of whites who still walk free. Based on a year-long review of case files, as well as on interviews with victims' families, alleged perpetrators, and federal and local authorities in Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana, the update detailed a number of cases that are now being reopened. Still, Saul observed, many more lie dormant, more or less hopeless stories of justice brutally denied.

◆ **DART** to *Daily Oklahoman* theater critic Franci Hart, for an amateurish performance. In her January 20 review of a new production by a local company, Hart sang the praises of author, director, star, and cast, then turned her spotlight on another player. "Newcomer Wendy Hart, as Dorine the maid, steals a couple of scenes with some fine pantomime," the critic wrote. "Look for her poignant action at the end." Readers were kept in the dark, however, about one essential fact: the enthusiastic reviewer is Wendy's Mom.

This column is written by Gloria Cooper, CJR's managing editor, to whom nominations should be addressed.

**In a Surprising Act of Redemption,
Denny's Becomes a Leader in Diversity**

**Chief diversity officer helps
Fortune smile on company**

**Denny's has gotten,
is spreading the message**

**Denny's launching TV ads
to promote 'talk about race'**

Once again, Denny's is making headlines.

These actual headlines mark our emergence as a leader in corporate diversity.
To see the whole story, call (212) 508-3504 and receive a copy of
"The Denny's Turnaround," a 27-minute video documentary.



Diversity. It's about all of us.

AN INTIMATE LOOK AT COVERING LITTLETON



Above: from left, Kucharski, Maass, Murphy, Rockford, Montgomery, Fine; below: Hoffacker

BY DEAN ROTBART

It was the kind of a story every journalist dreads: two young madmen slaughter fifteen, including themselves, at a nearby high school. Soon after he heard the first flashes, Denver journalist Dean Rotbart persuaded a local TV station to let him observe. Here is his account of how one journalistic organization covered the story.

It is after midnight in the newsroom of KCNC-TV, the CBS-owned affiliate in Denver. Reporters who've spent the day following the gruesome and emotionally exhausting details of the nation's worst-ever school shooting are dribbling in from their field assignments. In a few minutes, news director Angie Kucharski will begin handing out overnight assignments: Wake-up calls to the morning anchors at 2 A.M.; first newscast to air at 4 A.M.; first field crews to report for duty also at 4 A.M. More than half-a-dozen editorial staffers will be asked to work around the clock.

Over the past thirteen hours, the station has aired live, virtually nonstop, commercial-free coverage of the unfolding tragedy at Columbine High School in suburban Littleton, where two teenage students toting firearms and explosives have killed fifteen, including themselves, wounded twenty-eight, and shot a bullet through the heart of this mile high city.

Well over 150 newsroom regulars and extras pitched in to make the extensive coverage possible. Off-duty employees came to the station without being summoned and

took up posts. Newsroom hierarchies were discarded. Everyone, intern and news director alike, answered phones and responded wherever a need arose.

KCNC's news coverage, which I witnessed first hand, defies many of the most common negative stereotypes concerning broadcast journalism in general and local TV in particular.

Producers and reporters dug out this fluid and complex story in the best journalism tradition, calling sources, knocking on doors, surfing the Internet to find Web sites that the shooters had set up. With amazing speed, the news team came up with important details, notably the identities of the two student gunmen. But the station didn't rush to air with its scoop until staff members could get double and triple confirmations, which took several hours.

Nor did the station opt to show gore. KCNC editors had plenty of film to exploit had they wanted. In particular, cameramen captured one police SWAT team dragging two of the victims' bodies across the school's lawn — images that never once aired. In the heat of the story chase, newsroom editors talked about their responsibilities to decency and community values. No one dissented. Some angry viewers called the newsroom to complain that they were missing their favorite entertainment fare. But KCNC stuck to coverage of the high school massacre. Herewith a brief diary of the first thirteen hours:

11:22 A.M.: Word of a shooting crackles over the police radio. KCNC's assignment editor, Doug Hoffacker, dispatches camera crews to Columbine High School, about five miles southwest of the station.

11:45 A.M.: KCNC interrupts regular programming. No one can yet imagine the

severity of the tragedy, but KCNC is mobilizing teams of reporters, photographers, producers, and technicians. Soon four separate news crews are at the high school and two others are at a nearby elementary school.

General manager Marvin P. Rockford's philosophy is to roll first and ask questions later. "At the hint of a major breaking story, throw everything you've got at it as fast as you can," he says. "It's much easier to pull back than to recover if you fall behind."

Noon to 4 P.M.: As late as 3:45 P.M., news crews report shots can be heard inside the school. Dramatic aerial pictures from the KCNC news helicopter show students rushing from the school with their hands held over their heads — lest they be mistaken for the gunmen. Members of an alert KCNC camera crew talk their way onto the roof of a nearby residence with a clear view of the school. Viewers see police snipers targeting their weapons on the building. More chilling are the images of children trapped inside, their faces pressed up against the windows. They are confused and desperate faces looking for help.

4:15 P.M.: Assignment editor Hoffacker is in the anchor chair of a command center, surrounded by television monitors and radio receivers. He is in perpetual motion: speaking on the phone, answering questions from newsroom staffers, paging news crews in the field and monitoring what is being broadcast by KCNC and its three local competitors, KUSA (NBC), KMGH (ABC) and KWGN (WB).

Pacing around Hoffacker's horseshoe-shaped assignment desk in stockings, no shoes, is news director Kucharski. She had begun her job at KCNC only fifteen days earlier, after spending two years as news director at WBNS-TV, in Columbus, Ohio. Kucharski, 33, has yet to learn the

Dean Rotbart, a former Wall Street Journal columnist and editor, is founder and executive editor of the Denver-based TJFR Group, which publishes newsletters and databases that track the media.

names of everyone under her command. Yet tonight, she is charged with coordinating coverage of the biggest news story in Colorado broadcast history.

4:20 P.M.: After Hoffacker, the busiest person in the newsroom is managing editor Jacque Murphy, 32. It is she who is making most of the moment-to-moment newsroom decisions. Not once, in nearly nine hours of watching her, does Murphy have the luxury of concentrating on a single task. She is always juggling at least two emergencies with unwavering aplomb.

At this moment, she is trying to arrange post-daycare baby-sitting for her two children, ages 4 and 2, while also trying to clarify what role parent company CBS wants one of her local reporters to play on its evening news with Dan Rather. "I'm just a little crazed," she says calmly.

4:25 P.M.: From Studio 1, Bill Stuart and Aimee Sporer, the station's lead anchors, are conveying details to viewers as fast as they arrive. One of the reporters in the field phones in a news tidbit to Murphy. She relays it to assignment editor Hoffacker, who in turn passes it along to the news producer in the control booth. Seconds later, thanks to that little device he sports in his ear, Stuart is telling viewers that authorities think the student shooters may have been on a suicide mission.

4:35 P.M.: Brian Maass, the station's investigative reporter, is bouncing between his desk in the newsroom and the broadcast studio, where he is a fount of fresh and often exclusive information. Maass, explains general manager Rockford, has "very, very good law enforcement sources." Later in the day, those sources will enable Maass and KCNC to be the first to broadcast the names of the killers.

4:49 P.M.: General manager Rockford is pacing alone in news director Kucharski's corner office, hand on his chin, eyes affixed to the multiple TV monitors on her wall. He will pace like this much of the night, poking his head into the newsroom periodically, but leaving it to Kucharski and Murphy to call the shots.

4:58 P.M.: Assignment editor Hoffacker is trolling for information to pass along to the booth. "We have the school yearbook," he calls out. "Anybody have the names? Anybody have any names?" He sounds like an auctioneer looking for a higher bid.

Hoffacker and Murphy reassign reporters and photographers from one location to another. A church is planning a 7 P.M. service, Hoffacker wants live coverage. The local blood bank, which earlier put out an urgent call to relieve shortages, is now inundated; on screen flash images of donors snaking around the block.

5:16 P.M.: Staff members are requesting resources from Murphy that she doesn't

have. When it doesn't register with a reporter that no additional vehicles are available to haul remote-broadcast equipment, Murphy offers: "What kind of truck would you like me to dream up?" Eventually, she dreams up a solution: she approves a truck rental.

The toughest pressure comes from the need to fill all the airtime, especially since anchors Stuart and Sporer can't cut to a commercial when they run out of things to say — because the station is committed to stay commercial-free.

5:42 P.M.: Obstacles are mounting for managing editor Murphy. The 6 o'clock hour is growing near and KCNC will preempt CBS's network news, which normally runs in that time slot, to stay with local coverage. But some news photographers, their shifts over, are agitating about leaving to go home and reporters in the field seem confused about their assignments. Murphy dictates orders into the phone. To one reporter she says, "I don't want reunions. I don't want survivors. You are strictly dead kids."

5:55 P.M.: Ted Fine, producer of the 10 P.M. newscast, spends most of the evening sitting at his computer, writing the narratives that anchors Stuart and Sporer will use to introduce and segue between story packages. Amazingly, much of what these live anchors will say is first scripted by a producer or writer, then fed to the studio's teleprompters, or dictated to them from the control room through their earpieces.

6:00 P.M.: The producer in the control booth is desperate. Lacking any reporters to go to live in the field, she has to improvise by going to the weatherman. He gives a forecast. Meanwhile, KWGN, the local Warner station, completes its news coverage for the time being and airs its regularly scheduled *Friends* rerun.

6:05 P.M.: Murphy is being urged by her reporters to air the names of the two shooters, which KCNC staff have known for some time. "Don't put them out until we get confirmation," she insists.

6:38 P.M.: Murphy still won't let the station run the names and photos of the dead shooters. "I need one more confirmation," she says.

6:42 P.M.: General manager Rockford announces to the newsroom that they will stay on the air indefinitely. Murphy urges a reporter to press a police source for "a wink and nod" concerning the identities of the killers.

6:53 P.M.: KCNC becomes the first Denver station to publicly identify the shooters and to broadcast their photos. KMGH follows about thirty minutes later.

7:28 P.M.: The assignment desk is hearing all kinds of rumors from reporters in the field. One theory is that the two shooters

first set off diversionary pipe bombs around the area before their assault on the school. News director Kucharski is wary. "Let's just focus on what we know," she admonishes.

9:05 P.M.: After almost ten hours of continuous live broadcasts, Murphy puts her head in her hand. Fatigue and frustration are beginning to show.

10:00 P.M.: This is the local time slot for the late evening news. Up on the screen comes a graphic with the words "School Shooting." It is less than a work of art. "Why do you put something so [expletive] ugly on the air?" Murphy cries out.

A reporter is pressing her to get a camera crew over to the home of one of the shooters. She has no crew available. "The man is dead and his parents aren't home," Murphy responds. "We don't need to be there."

10:15 P.M.: No commercial interruptions yet. Murphy makes it clear that she doesn't want KCNC to be the first to break for a commercial. She then slips in a call to her baby-sitter. "Put them to sleep," she instructs. She says she hopes that her husband, KCNC assignment manager John Montgomery, will be able to pull away and pick up the kids by 10:45 P.M.

10:43 P.M.: Only seventeen minutes left until KCNC ends its continuous broadcasts and moves to live, half-hourly updates for the remainder of the evening. Nevertheless, Murphy moves on a tip that a former employer of the shooters, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, is saying they were good, decent kids. "We need that [interview] for balance," she explains, asking a reporter to chase the lead.

11:02 P.M.: Finally, off the air. Anchor Sporer appears in the newsroom. Someone has handed her a Wendy's cheeseburger and she wolfs it down. Kucharski asks Sporer to stay on to anchor the half-hourly updates until the morning anchors arrive, around 3:30 A.M.

After Midnight: Murphy tells Hoffacker, who regularly ends his work day at 5 P.M., to go home. Despite the late hour and grueling day, he hasn't skipped a beat or lost his smile. "No, I can't go," he says. "There are too many things to do."

Later in the morning, Rockford is sitting in his executive office, musing over the previous twenty-four hours. This day is different from all others, he says, because of the enormity of the loss and its huge emotional impact.

Yet, the need of local news broadcasters to rise to the occasion, be it a tornado or a plane crash, is one that Rockford believes occurs someplace in this country every day. "There are few people who have spent any time in this profession who haven't dealt with something like this," he says. "They all know what it's like." ■

AWARDS

INSIDE THE PULITZERS

BY THE EDITORS OF THE COLUMBIA JOURNALISM REVIEW

After a terrible year for journalism, after the inventions of Steve Glass and Patricia Smith and Mike Barnicle, after the scandals of Tailwind and Chiquita, after the saga of Bill and Monica and Ken, after all that and more, a band of seventy-seven senior journalists and academics gathered at the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism for three eye-straining days in March and got to see something *good* about the profession — at last. They were the nominating jurors for the 1999 Pulitzer Prizes in journalism — and among them they studied 1,477 entries submitted by newspaper and wire service editors as the best of their best. And what did the jurors draw from this experience?

The most typical reaction came from Jeff Cohen, editor of the *Times Union* of Albany, New York: "Anyone who suggests there is a bleak future for newspapers in America just had to sit in that judging room. It was inspiring." To which David Rubin, dean of the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University, added: "If **"IT WAS INSPIRING"** you're a cynic, all you had to do was read the entries in Public Service. It would blow away all your cynicism. This restores your faith in journalism."

The jurors were divided into fourteen groups, from Beat Reporting to Feature Photography. Each group had five to seven jurors, whose job was to pick three finalists in its category. Those were then sent on

to the Pulitzer board, consisting of twenty leading journalists, authors, and scholars, who in April chose the ultimate winners. The board is sworn to secrecy forever, but the rules permit the jurors to speak freely of their deliberations as soon as the win-

ners are announced. So CJR interviewed more than half of the seventy-seven jurors (there were 63 men, 14 women), inquiring about their experiences and reactions, their surprises and lessons learned.

The field was rich, the competition tough. Mel Opatowsky, ombudsman for

"YOU FIND A PROBLEM AND POUND AWAY AT IT"

the *Press-Enterprise* in Riverside, California, was in the Beat Reporting category: "Of the 150 entries we had in my panel, I'd say that only about 10 shouldn't have been there, and of the rest, 20 or 30 were serious, serious contenders."

When making their choices, the jurors asked such questions as: Is the subject significant? Is this entry really original and breaking new ground? Did the story make a difference?

"I found myself looking for results, as a way to separate competing entries," said David R. Jones, a consultant to *The New York Times* after thirty-four years there, who was on the Investigative Reporting panel. "If an entry showed good work but had no consequences, I would find myself gravitating to another entry that had impact."

The Story of the Year — Clinton/Lewinsky — won very little. Some comments from various jurors: "I was so sick of that story." "The entries were all about the

"LENGTH DOESN'T EQUAL EXCELLENCE"

same." "Even the best of the coverage was flawed in some way." On the other hand, the vast majority of the Cartoon entrants focussed on The Scandal. Said Maria Henson, deputy editorial page editor of the *Austin American-Statesman*: "If I saw one

more Clinton as Pinocchio cartoon, or one more *Playboy* bunny seal on the side of Air Force One, I'd be ready to leave the room."

And in the Commentary category, it was, as Robert Hodierna, national editor of the Newhouse News Service put it, "All Monica, all the way." A few sports columnists were seriously considered, but the Clinton controversy was dominant. Indeed, said Edward Pease, a Utah State University professor, "There were so

many zippergate stories it was oppressive." The Commentary jury was divided among several candidates at first. Phil Bronstein, executive editor of the *San Francisco Examiner*, said this of the eventual winner: "It was very hard after a year of this story to have it seem particularly fresh and relevant, but [New York Times columnist] Maureen

Dowd managed to stay provocative, irreverent, and hilarious. I found myself laughing out loud, even now."

In general, what also appealed to jurors, said Morris Thompson, Knight Ridder's assistant foreign editor, who was on the Public Service panel, "was good, old-fashioned reporting — finding something and pursuing it," instead of planning a grand project from the ivory tower.

That was the case with the New York *Daily News*, which won a Pulitzer for the third time in four years, this time for a series of editorials calling for the rescue of Harlem's landmark Apollo theater from financial mismanagement by some local power brokers. One of the jurors, Philip Gailey, editorial page editor of the *St. Petersburg Times*, called it "old-fashioned editorial writing at its best: You find a problem and pound away at it — nothing fancy." Echoed Susan Albright, who runs the Minneapolis *Star-Tribune* editorial pages: "The *Daily News* editorials were simplified, short, argued from the heart, and always in-your-face."

A most unusual editorial-writing entry was made by the *Mobile (Alabama) Register*. With a state election coming, the paper hired the former editorial page edi-



tor to travel through the South and write a series of editorials on why Alabama is far behind other states on so many social issues, and to link its plight with the state's sorry political leadership. "It was the favorite of nearly all the jurors," said Gailey, "until somebody pointed out that, after having gone to all the trouble to educate voters, the editors at the end of the series declared that they chose not to endorse either candidate for governor" because they disliked both of them. To the jurors, this was a cop-out. The moral:

"MAYBE WHAT WE NEED IS A COURAGE IN JOURNALISM AWARD"

make choices, stay the course, have the courage of your convictions.

The jurors saw a lot of stories about the sufferings of the defenseless: about abuse of children and mental patients, nursing home residents and prisoners, about people who had been killed by police. Medical care was also a hot subject, with several entries that were praised by jurors but did not win the prize. The Fort Lauderdale *Sun-Sentinel*, for example, had a much remarked upon series on the often concealed dangers of cosmetic surgery. *Newsday* ran a series showing — with the help of considerable computer data — that even if incomes, educational levels, and other key indicators are equal, whites receive much better medical care than blacks on Long Island (and presumably elsewhere).

Computer-assisted reporting, no longer a toy but an invaluable tool, played a key role in many entries. Among them was the winner in Public Service, *The Washington Post's* series showing that the District of Columbia police killed more people per capita in the 1990s than any other big-city police force (See "Questioning the Cops," *CJR*, March/April). *The Miami Herald* used some computer-assisted reporting to dig aggressively into a tainted mayoral election and prove voter fraud; the report helped overturn the election — and brought a Pulitzer in Investigative Reporting.

This year, for the first time, online reports were eligible for consideration, but only in the Public Service category. Just fourteen out of a total 107 entrants submitted online reports along with their printed stories, a disappointing total. In the future, online exhibits will continue to be accepted in Public Service, but not in other categories — as

yet. Columbia journalism professor Steve Ross did a survey of 371 newspaper Web sites for the Pulitzer board and found, said Pulitzer Prize administrator Seymour Topping, that "there wasn't enough quality and original material out there to justify going into another category this coming year." But the board intends to do so in later years.

The typical category drew 100 to 150 entries, but International attracted only 48 and National Reporting 41. Those subjects are doubly disadvantaged: they're costly to

cover, and they lose ground to the new emphasis on local news. Orville Schell,

writer and dean of the Graduate School of Journalism at the University of California, Berkeley, said of his International panel: "Fully half to two-thirds of those forty-eight submissions never would have been written were there not a Pulitzer Prize. They were complex and not read by many people, though they're essential for a small number of people to be well-informed about. The only plausible reason they were done is because the paper probably wants to gain some plaudits."

One of the most popular entries among the jurors tackled a complex international issue by employing a simple, familiar, local example: the humble french fry. Trekking from the potato farms to the potato processing plants of the Pacific Northwest to McDonald's

are from large papers. "Maybe what we need is a Courage in Journalism award," he said. "It takes more courage for a little paper to go after the power structure in a small town than it does for a big one to go after the president."

In general, small papers missed the cut not so much because of their reporting but their editing. Several of their well-reported stories could have been better packaged and more sharply cut. But the latter criticism applied to many entries from big papers as well. Said one juror: "Some editors have to learn that it's possible to tell a big story in fewer than twenty parts. Length doesn't equal excellence." Wendy Zomparelli, vice president of the *Roanoke Times*, said, "We started calling it the spare tire problem — good stories that were too fat in the middle." All three finalists in her Feature Writing category were relatively short.

Washington Post critic Tom Shales, a member of the Criticism panel, lobbed another little grenade: "There is so much sameness, and flatulence, and pomposity in the writing I read about film that it didn't seem to me that any film critic this year really stood out." As it happened, Blair Kamin of the *Chicago Tribune* won the prize in Criticism, mostly for his series supporting the intelligent development of the Chicago lakefront. After some debate among the jurors, his entry had been moved from Criticism to Beat Reporting, and nominated as a finalist

MANY STORIES "NEVER WOULD HAVE BEEN WRITTEN WERE THERE NOT A PULITZER PRIZE"

outlets in Southeast Asia, writer Richard Read showed in *The Oregonian* how Asia's economic meltdown burned the Oregon economy, by cutting back purchases and investments. It won the prize for Explanatory Journalism. Said John Walter, managing editor of the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*: "It was the ultimate how-does-this-affect-our-reader story."

The jurors were disappointed that few small papers made it to the finals. Probable reason: good journalism costs money, and small papers lack the resources. One that reached the finals in the Breaking News category was *The Jonesboro (Arkansas) Sun*, circulation 28,000, for its aggressive yet sensitive coverage of the fatal shootings by two boys at a local middle school.

The fact that large papers tend to win, one panelist said, may have some connection to the reality that most of the judges

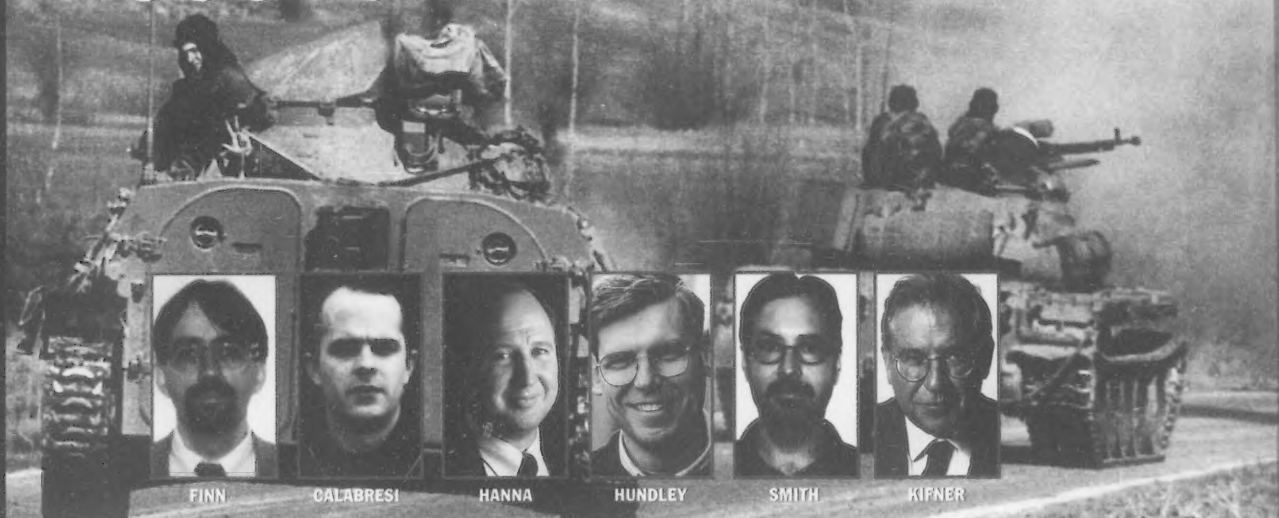
there. The series indeed relied on a beat reporter's knowledge, but also included the writer's distinctive voice and a vision for the future. In the end, the Pulitzer board moved Kamin back to Criticism and awarded him the prize there.

Such horse-trading fairly often occurs. "Sometimes the pieces don't fall easily into the categories as they are structured," said John Haile, editor of *The Orlando Sentinel*. "This one did not. But it was excellent journalism, and it deserved to win."

The last word belongs to David Boardman, assistant managing editor of *The Seattle Times*, who was on the Investigative Reporting jury: "Every one of us on my panel walked away feeling relieved — inspired, actually — by the quality of work that's being done." His only regret? "It's a bit sad that most of the public isn't seeing this range of work." ■

WAR COVERAGE

KOSOVO: A SPECIAL REPORT



How correspondents are dealing with the hazards, harassments, and hassles of getting the news out of the Balkans

BY KEVIN McAULIFFE

When NATO bombs began falling on Yugoslavia on March 24, correspondents for U.S. news organizations found themselves close to ground zero. But with a little ingenuity — and the aid of the latest generation of Information Age devices — they've been managing to get an impressive amount of the story out.

Serb authorities, backed by machine guns, swooped down on Belgrade's Hyatt Hotel, home base for most Western journalists, while the first air raids on the city were still under way — trapping a group of newspeople on the rooftop and expelling nearly thirty. The scene had elements of the surreal. In mid-dragnet, the dreaded paramilitary leader Arkan strutted into the Hyatt and, even as a bomb was landing on the nearby Interior Ministry, granted a one-on-one interview to Massimo Calabresi of *Time* — who was at that moment having his accreditation revoked.

Though some correspondents were

Kevin McAuliffe is a New York-based freelance writer.

herded to the police station and ordered to hand over their cell phones, *Boston Globe* stringer Susan Milligan, inexplicably, managed to hold onto hers; she quickly called her foreign editor, Nils Bruzelius, right after leaving the station. CBS and ABC were booted out, although ABC later got back in; NBC was allowed to stay. CNN was singled out by Serb propaganda as a "factory of lies," and suffered an estimated \$500,000 loss in equipment that was stolen, damaged, or destroyed as part of a harassment campaign. But Serbian television continued to carry CNN.

Tom Hundley of the *Chicago Tribune* was expelled, but his partner Guy Denmore, a Yugoslavia resident, was not. *The New York Times's* Steve Erlanger was ordered out, then allowed to return — but his colleague Carlotta Gall was less fortunate. As part of the media contingent based in the Kosovar capital of Pristina, she got to watch one fellow reporter's car being set on fire as they were forced across the border into Albania. She has been covering the rest of the story from refugee camps in Albania and Macedonia.

Most in the media echoed NBC News veep Bill Wheatley that "there seems to be no rhyme or reason" to the

expulsions. (One theory offered by *Time's* Calabresi: an internal power struggle between moderate Yugoslav officials willing to accommodate Western media and firebrand Serbian radicals fiercely loyal to Slobodan Milosevic.) Still, it was apparent that Serbian authorities had a short list of reporters — and media outlets — slated for special treatment. CBS's Mark Phillips was awakened at 3:30 A.M. by a knock from "room service" that turned out to be Serbian police, who arrested him and held him for ten hours before dumping him off at the Croatian border.

When the network sent London correspondent Richard Roth to replace Phillips, the Yugoslavs decided suddenly that his visa was invalid. More than two weeks into the hostilities, CBS was still cooling its heels for access. But then in mid-April, Dan Rather got into Belgrade, the only network anchorman to report from the Yugoslav capital.

Both *Washington Post* correspondents on the scene at the outset of hostilities were arrested — Peter Finn in the first-night roundup, and R. Jeffrey Smith while trying to drive from Montenegro to Belgrade — and expelled, with no replacements allowed in for ten

SYGMA

crucial days. One probable cause, thinks *Post* foreign news editor Phil Bennett: the pair did a story on Serb massacres in Kosovo that U.S. diplomat Richard Holbrooke personally showed to Milosevic during one of their meetings when Holbrooke led a last-minute mission to head off the bombing.

Reporters banished to the border camps in Macedonia and Albania had to cover the "ethnic cleansing" mass atrocities after the fact from refugee accounts, but several — notably *The New York Times*'s John Kifner — did superb jobs of reconstructing the massacres. Those assignments had one blessed advantage: they did not have to contend with a fear factor on the ground inside Serbia the likes of which American journalists have not experienced in decades.

Even veteran foreign correspondents were fazed. Mark Phillips had been in Iraq for the U.S.-British December cruise missile attacks, and with fellow correspondents, taped that action with no hassle from Iraq officials. In Belgrade, the attitude toward journalists has been far more aggressive and threatening. Says NBC's Wheatley: "In Baghdad, there was no lawless atmosphere as you have now. Here, they just don't like us. And, while we'd all love to be in Kosovo, we have to look very carefully about sending any of our people into a lawless atmosphere."

As of mid-April, NBC and other outlets still in Belgrade were complying with the rules. "They've asked to see our tapes, and we've shown them, and to my knowledge they have asked us to remove nothing," Wheatley says. *New York Times* international news editor Andrew Rosenthal and *Chicago Tribune* foreign editor Garry Thatcher likewise report that their dispatches aren't being censored and correspondents have been free to move around without overt surveillance.

But possible government interference has been only one consideration for journalists on the scene. Even before the bombing began, says *Time*'s Calabresi, "you had to be careful about setting up your satellite phones inside people's houses for fear those families would suffer retaliation. There was a lot of paranoia in Belgrade." Good sources "were afraid that once we used the phones from their homes, the government could track them down." Others were suspicious that the phones were really "homing beacons to guide bombs."

Newsweek's chief of foreign correspondents Mike Glennon noted that when staffer Mark Dennis phoned him, Dennis was not only extremely circumspect talking on the phone — but had begun conducting most of his interviews in Serbian, lest the sound of conversing with sources in English place them in danger. Riskier still is the status of those Serbians who served Western correspondents in Kosovo, translating interviews and shooting film, and who have been left behind what are now enemy lines — a topic one publication wouldn't even discuss.

Next door, in Montenegro, correspondents encountered a growing confrontation between the civilian government — which maintained neutrality and whose police sought to protect journalists — and the pro-Milosevic military, which was openly hostile to Western media. No sooner was he expelled from Belgrade than *Newsweek*'s Dennis took a wrong turn down a Montenegro street and had his car and cell phone confiscated by soldiers. Mike Hanna of CNN, a veteran of the Bosnian and Croatian civil wars, arrived in Montenegro on March 27 and within ten minutes had his vehicle and all equipment stolen by the military.

"Obviously, we're not going to risk losing our remaining gear," Hanna said in a satellite call. To compensate, he and his crew "have been letting local cameramen cover the event, and we have access to their coverage." On one of the few occasions when they did venture out, they were five minutes into shooting when provocateurs began stirring up crowds of Serbians against them and they were obliged to leave. Their last satellite dish remains inside the hotel. "We don't dare move it up to the border."

No reporter rated more professional envy — and none's fate was of more concern — in the early days of the conflict than Paul Watson of the *Los Angeles Times*. After being ejected from Belgrade and having his bullet-proof rental car confiscated, Watson (normally head of the paper's Vienna bureau) managed to hitch a ride with colleagues, rent another car, drive into Kosovo, and — after that car too was confiscated — remain in Pristina to keep on filing reports.

Understandably, the *Times* international news editor, Simon Li, is skittish about revealing Watson's *modus operandi* — and the paper has been reluctant to trumpet


Watson's stories. "The Serbs know that he's there. They know that he's filing. And they know where. But they haven't bothered him. He doesn't call us much — and when he does, he speaks in a very quiet whisper. Maybe the fact that he's a Canadian citizen has helped. But we have to be discreet and not flaunt it."

Amid all the difficulties, correspondents on the scene coped. Some in old-fashioned ways. When the region's airports were shut down, Albania-bound reporters hopped on board a three-to-four hour ferry ride from the Italian port of Bari across rough Adriatic waters. "A lot of journalists have rediscovered the joy of traveling by trains and ferries," quips the *Chicago Tribune*'s Garry Thatcher.

Others triumphed over adversity thanks to advances in the Information Revolution — satellite dishes more mobile than ever, cell phones more reliable ("half of the good interviews I've gotten I got while driving," says Calabresi), satellite phones with longer battery life. The SATphones, though still bulky, proved to be the big breakthrough weapon for the media in the early stages of the conflict — enabling reporters equipped with laptop, modem, and disk to transmit entire stories from wherever they were. Correspondents alerted to the Belgrade crackdown made a point of hiding their SATphones beforehand or lodging them with their local translators.

Other new tech forms proved their value as well. Calabresi filed his stories via e-mail in friendly mailboxes all across Europe just before the raid on the Hyatt. *The Boston Globe*'s Kevin Kullen filed stories from the war zone armed only with his laptop — and a local London cell phone. Mike Glennon in New York was able to convene a conference call of six *Newsweek* correspondents from different locations in the field, all via cell and SAT-phones. "I marvel at what they're accomplishing out there," he says.

Of course, no amount of technology can take the place of solid on-the-spot reporting. As the conflict wore on, journalists were adjusting to reporting an incomplete story in the face of dangerous obstacles. "It's frustrating for journalists not to be where the events are occurring," says *The Washington Post*'s Phil Bennett. "We will eventually know what's been happening in Kosovo. It's just a matter of time, and of access. But we should be there now. Every day delays our ability to know." ■



Free at last:
Anthony Porter, a former
death row inmate, was released
in February after student journalists
investigated his case.

INNOCENT?

Wrongful Convictions: Three Books and Ten Lessons for Journalists

BY STEVE WEINBERG

"My experience as a newspaper reporter and author," Edward Humes writes in his new book, *Mean Justice*, "taught me that claims of innocence from convicted criminals are often made, seldom proved, and usually refuted."

Steve Weinberg, a CJR contributing editor, was executive director of Investigative Editors and Reporters from 1983 to 1990 and is the author of seven nonfiction books.

So it was against his better judgment five years ago that Humes accepted four boxes of documents from a private investigator concerning *People of Kern County vs. Patrick O'Dale Dunn*. The investigator, Laura Lawhon, had become convinced that Dunn, her client — a businessman and former school principal — had been wrongfully convicted of murdering his wife in Bakersfield, California. He is serving a life sentence.

Humes had won a 1989 Pulitzer Prize at the *Orange County Register*, and had since written four books about the criminal justice system. So, Lawhon asked Humes if he would examine the Dunn

case. As he dug in, somewhat reluctantly, Humes's skepticism disappeared. And as he learned more during visits to Kern County he concluded that wrongful convictions occur more often than he had ever imagined. The full title of his book about the case, published in February by Simon & Schuster, is *Mean Justice: A Town's Terror, A Prosecutor's Power, A Betrayal of Innocence*.

In Chicago, journalists David Protess and Rob Warden had investigated wrongful convictions many years before Humes. Their first book in 1993 helped the parents of a slain seven-year-old girl clear their names. A more recent Prot-

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ess/Warden book, *A Promise of Justice: The Eighteen-Year Fight to Save Four Innocent Men* (Hyperion, 1998) details the reporting that freed all four members of a quartet wrongfully convicted of rape and murder. Two of the four narrowly escaped execution.

In that case, Warden got involved because of a letter bearing the return address "Condemned Unit, Box 711, Menard, Illinois." It arrived out of the blue at *Chicago Lawyer* magazine in 1981, where Warden was then editor. Managing editor Margaret Roberts opened it, and asked Warden whether she should check into the prisoner's protestations of innocence. He said offhandedly, "No harm in taking a look at the testimony he claims is perjured."

Roberts did take a look, when she could squeeze out the time. The more she learned the more horrified she became. Fourteen years later, with no justice in sight despite stories by Roberts, Warden, and other journalists who followed their lead, Protess, a Northwestern University journalism professor, agreed to help, and enlisted some of his students. The men were freed largely because Warden, Protess, and his students located exonerating evidence. Then they found evidence that led to the real perpetrators.

Another recently published and compelling account is *Victims of Justice: The True Story of Two Innocent Men Condemned to Die and a Prosecution Out of Control* (Avon, 1998), by Thomas Frisbie, a *Chicago Sun-Times* reporter, and Randy Garrett, an independent researcher. It starts with the rape-murder of a ten-year-old girl abducted from her home in Naperville, Illinois. The book argues that wrongful arrests and convictions occurred, and ends with indictments of the seven law enforcement officers and prosecutors involved for allegedly using phony evidence to build the case. Opening arguments in the closely watched trial started April 6.

Unfortunately, as books like these suggest, the phenomenon of wrongful conviction is not as rare as most of us would like to believe. A search of computer databases (the most productive search term seems to be "false imprisonment") turns up hundreds of such cases.

Just this winter, on February 5, Anthony Porter, 43, walked out of prison

in Chicago after prosecutors asked for his release, thanks in large measure to Protess and several of his Northwestern students, who took on the case as a class project. Porter at one point had been two days away from execution. Since the Supreme Court reinstated the death penalty in 1976, at least seventy-four men on death row have been found innocent. Any one of them could have been executed before exoneration.

Into almost every newsroom sooner or later comes a letter from a prison cell, an assertion of innocence. And from time to time these letters contain a sentence or a paragraph that makes them difficult to trash. Not many reporters and editors are willing to question the official line about an arrest or conviction. But for those willing to invest time, these three books offer lessons, particularly when looked at in conjunction with other journalism about wrongful convictions.

Some of those lessons apply not just to the painstaking work of examining a possibly unjust conviction but to basic criminal justice coverage. Here are some of the lessons I drew from these books, other readings, and my own reporting, presented in the hope that they will encourage realistic investigations into possibly wrongful convictions, and perhaps help prevent wrongful convictions:

ONE. In the criminal justice system, investigators often rely on statistical patterns. For example, parents are usually the perpetrators of crimes against young children when those crimes occur in the home. Wives dead from foul play are usually murdered by their husbands, as was the assumption of the investigators portrayed in *Mean Justice*. But when the beginning hypothesis hardens into a conclusion too quickly, contradictory evidence might be misinterpreted or overlooked.

Jumping to conclusions is perhaps most insidious when

based on race. Police in *A Promise of Justice*, for example, made no distinction between African-American men from the area who were likely to rape and murder based on past behavior, and men who had demonstrated no such past behavior. (Of the four blacks originally convicted, none had been in serious legal trouble. But two of those who were eventually found to have actually committed the crime had a documented penchant for violence.)

TWO. The reputations and records of the defense attorneys matter. Protess and Warden discovered that four of the defense lawyers in *A Promise of Justice* had personal problems and disciplinary records that surely compromised effective representation.

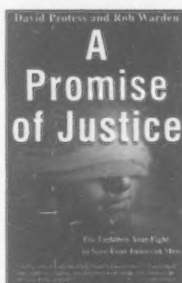
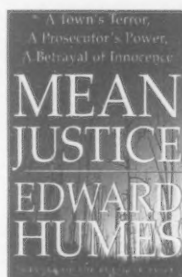
In *Victims of Justice*, Frisbie and Garrett found that their low-income defendants drew public defenders of more savory character, but they were far from ideal advocates. One had tried few cases

in recent years; the other was already struggling with eighty cases. Journalists can research differences between public defenders' and private-practice lawyers' representation. Does the defense have an adequate investigative budget, including money for DNA or other high-tech testing? Has the defense interviewed all potential direct and character witnesses?

THREE. Honest mistakes or officially sanctioned lawlessness can occur in every step of the investigative process.

An honest mistake documented by Frisbie and Garrett in *Victims of Justice* grew out of the refusal of the county sheriff and municipal police to pool resources. The murdered girl's home was just outside the city line, giving the sheriff jurisdiction. But Naperville police got the first call, so they began gathering evidence before the deputies arrived. When the deputies showed up, they ordered the cops to leave.


But the deputies lacked manpower, and could canvass only so much of the neighborhood. As a result, they



never visited a nearby church where a man acting strangely had entered, just a few minutes before randomly selecting the victim's house as a burglary possibility. If law enforcement officers had interviewed the church secretary, they might have arrested the real perpetrator within hours — rather than three innocent men more than a year after the murder.

Some police mistakes turn out to be anything but honest. Good police reporters can get to know which investigators have reputations for stretching the truth, for racist remarks, for brutality.

One of the most memorable characters in the Humes book is a detective who regularly falsified information in official reports, always to a suspect's disadvantage. Prosecutors, in turn, used the misinformation at trial.

There are so many tactics to explore: Were  sses with testimony favorable to the defense passed over by police during the interview stage? Were other witnesses threatened, coached, paid? Did police suggest which suspect to finger in a lineup? Did police write two reports — one meant for the defense, another for internal files — as happened in *A Promise*

of Justice? Are police withholding some reports altogether?

FOUR. Then there are the prosecutors. It seems unthinkable to many journalists that prosecutors — officers of the court sworn to uphold justice — would intentionally withhold exculpatory evidence, encourage witnesses to lie, or present testimony known to be untrue. But such practices are common in wrongful convictions.

Frisbie and Garrett learned that an assistant state's attorney lied under oath as the case they investigated unfolded. They asked about the reputation of the chief prosecutor, too. They heard again and again that, as they write, "he was the kind of lawyer who could fall victim to the Prosecution Complex, who could get so focused on winning a case that no amount of evidence could convince him he had the wrong suspects."

That Prosecution Complex insight provided a major theme for their book. It helped them understand, for example, why defense attorneys were kept in the dark about the findings of the county's own shoe-print expert in the *Victims of Justice* case. That expert had concluded that a shoe print left when somebody kicked in the victim's front door failed to match shoes worn by the wrongly accused men. But rather than dismiss the charges, or at least reveal the finding to the defense, the prosecutor said nothing. Defense lawyers learned about the exculpatory evidence only when a county employee with a conscience provided a confidential tip.

These kinds of things are most likely to happen when an unethical prosecutor has a weak case — no physical evidence or eyewitnesses linking the defendant to the crime scene. Just as sharp police reporters tend to learn the records and reputations of certain cops, courthouse reporters can learn about prosecutors. Statistics and case files are plentiful, and so is courthouse gossip.

FIVE. Evaluate the witnesses. Is it possible a witness is trying to trade testimony for something of value? Jailhouse informers, for example, often have ulterior motives. A snitch investigated by Protess and Warden had been put up to his incriminating lie by the brother of a man who turned out to be one of the real murderers. Prosecutors abetted the lie by coaching the snitch and dropping an unrelated criminal charge against him.

Have there been inconsistencies over



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time in the testimony of a particular witness? Journalists can compare the initial statement to police with grand jury testimony when available, then with trial testimony. Does the testimony become suspiciously more certain over time?

SIX. Examine the documents, build a chronology. A close reading of indictments, pre-trial affidavits, depositions, and confessions, paired with study of trial exhibits and trial transcripts, will often uncover discrepancies and gaps. By studying the record in this way, Frisbie and Garrett, in *Victims of Justice*, showed that amidst the trials and retrials, the prosecution changed its theory of the case. In the first trial of one defendant, prosecutors said the ten-year-old had been killed at a certain spot, as proved by a mass of blood there. In the second trial, the prosecution said the girl had been killed elsewhere, and that there was no mass of blood at the original site. One of the versions had to be a lie.

SEVEN. Think about the jury. In all three of these books it became obvious to the authors that many jurors give only lip service to the axiom "innocent until proven guilty." In both Chicago-area murder cases — the horrific killing of the ten-year-old girl in *Victims of Justice*, the rape and murders detailed in *A Promise of Justice* — many jurors were uncertain of the defendants' guilt. But they had no intention of risking placing defendants accused of such crimes back on the street.

EIGHT. Don't rule out a criminal conspiracy. That is exactly what is alleged in the *Victims of Justice* case profiled by Frisbie and Garrett. As noted, the book ends with the indictment of seven prosecutors and sheriffs deputies. They are charged with perjury and conspiring to obstruct justice by framing a man named Rolando Cruz, partly by fabricating a story that Cruz had told them of a detailed dream he had about the murder. Their trial is expected to last well into the spring.

Expert witnesses who appear to possess impeccable credentials can be sucked into a conspiracy. That was part of the *Victims of Justice* story in Chicago. An imported shoe-print expert, an anthropology professor from North Carolina, was little more than a crackpot despite her advanced degrees. Her theories and practices were so ludicrous on their face that she was a laughingstock among reputable forensic scientists. But prosecutors used her with straight

faces, understanding that for a fee of \$1,000 a day she would help place the accused behind bars.

In *Presumed Guilty: When Innocent People Are Wrongly Convicted* (Prometheus, 1991), author Martin Yant tells of a case in which two employees of a state crime lab conspired to provide false information while detectives and prosecutors looked the other way. Their apparent motive: to quickly close the books on a high-profile rape-murder by framing an easy mark. In another case in Yant's book, police witnesses knowingly altered their testimony over a peri-

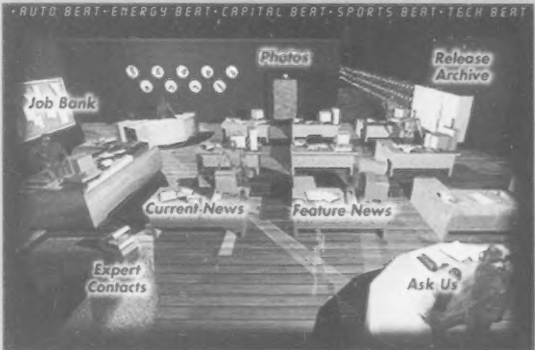
od of months to nail an alleged cop killer. The alterations would have been obvious right away to a thorough journalist.

NINE. Don't expect a lot of cooperation when investigating the investigators. People in the criminal justice system tend to protect their own.

TEN. Be skeptical of journalistic accounts. Reporters often are spoon-fed by prosecutors or, less often, by defense attorneys. This can lead to selective use of evidence in the journalistic account, conscious or unconscious. That caution holds even for wrongful conviction books. ■

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HOW THE MONICA STORY PLAYED IN MID-AMERICA

BY MICHAEL GARTNER

The performance of the press in covering the sad story of Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinsky will be debated for years to come. So far, it has been widely criticized by political figures, scholars — and notably by journalists themselves, largely in Washington, New York, and other large cities on the two coasts. But what's the view from the Heartland? For an opinion, CJR asked Michael Gartner, editor and co-owner of The Tribune in Ames, Iowa, who is also a former president of NBC News and winner of the 1997 Pulitzer Prize for editorial writing. His evaluation:

The Scandal looked different from Iowa.

The "all-Monica" cable channels aren't even on the systems in Des Moines and Ames and many other Iowa

towns. The talk at dinner parties was about schools and property taxes and city councils. The screaming headlines — on those rare occasions when there were screaming headlines — were about crimes, but not high crimes and misdemeanors.

There was discussion of Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinsky and Kenneth Starr, of course, but it didn't fill up our every inch of newsprint or consume our every second of airtime. We knew the scandal was a grave situation, and we decided for ourselves who were the good guys and who the bad. And we were exceptionally well-informed.

We were well-informed, because in Iowa, like most of the nation outside of Washington and New York, we got most of our news from The Associated Press (which serves 1,550 newspapers in the United States) and The New York Times News Service (which has 350 newspa-

per clients) and the three traditional broadcast networks (which go into 98 million households).

They did a remarkably good job.

That's the view of this editor, who read the wires day in and day out — and it's the view of Americans answering pollsters' questions.

Sure, the cable channels were often obsessed and dreadful (Chris Matthews is particularly obnoxious, Geraldo Rivera is particularly obsequious, and Larry King is particularly egotistical). But few people watch them. Even the news of Clinton's acquittal was only the twenty-first highest-ranked cable program of that week, and the Senate's voting the articles of impeachment was the fourteenth highest. No other news show in cable was in the top twenty-four. On CNN, the acquittal went into 2,216,000 households; Monday Night Wrestling, on TNT, went into 4,477,000 house-

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AP/WIDEWORLD/DANIEL HILSHUTZ



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holds. By contrast, around 60 million households buy a newspaper every day, and some 30 million households watch the ABC, CBS, or NBC evening news shows every night.

It is true, as critics note, that the scandal shoved other important news off the front pages and off the evening news. But were those stories more important than the impeachment and the events leading up to it? Probably not. Campaign finance, Social Security, even East Timor and Uganda will still be in the news next month and next year, and you can always get back to them. But impeachment was the story of the year.

The output was prodigious. The Washington bureau of The Associated Press moved 4,109 stories on the scandal in the one year after it broke on January 21, 1998. It had twenty-five reporters working regularly on the story. *The New York Times* had a dozen Washington reporters on it, with another handful working on it in other cities.

Was all of this coverage — as some charge — a “feeding frenzy” by an over-eager press pushed by Washington bureau chiefs who delight in seeing big politicians tumble? In my view it’s outrageous even to make such a charge. This was the greatest human, moral, political, and constitutional drama in our country since the end of the Civil War. It threatened to bring down a government and, perhaps more significantly, turn the country into a parliamentary democracy. It will reverberate forever. This was not just a lurid story like that of O.J. Simpson or JonBenet Ramsey. This was a drama about democracy.

The impeachment of a president comes along only “once every 130 years,” says AP Washington bureau chief Sandy Johnson. “Lord knows that [a big story that comes] once a century is the story of any journalist, the story of his or her career.” Who could fault this argument? Well, historian Arthur Schlesinger for one. He likened the press’s performance to the yellow journalism of the old Hearst and Pulitzer days. And, he said at a *Columbia Journalism Review* forum on the eve of the impeachment vote: “I’ve never seen a greater disjunction between the media and the electorate than as we see at this moment.”

Schlesinger was only half right. But the mainstream press went out of its

way to avoid yellow journalism. Alan Murray, Washington bureau chief of *The Wall Street Journal*, said it was “a race to be last” in printing sex news about the president. Joseph Lelyveld, executive editor of *The New York Times*, told his staff: “This is the only area of news where I can’t imagine wanting to be first. I need not just an excuse to do it. I need to be deprived of my last excuse not to do it.” Thus the *Times*’s news pages barely mentioned the revelations from *Hustler* magazine publisher Larry Flynt of some congressmen’s sexual misadventures.

The investigation barely made the top ten stories that Americans said they were following very closely in 1998.

When mainstream newspapers did publish steamy and seamy news, it was usually only after it became general knowledge through the new media — the Internet and the all-news cable networks — and only after it had been verified and deemed relevant.

Still, there was a disjunction. The three traditional networks devoted 1,931 minutes to the Clinton scandal story on their evening news shows in 1998 — more than the next seven most-aired subjects combined. Those seven were the year’s news from Iraq, Serbia, and the Mideast, the Wall Street gyrations, El Niño, tornadoes, and the embassy bombings in Africa, according to Andrew Tyndall, a New York researcher who meticulously keeps track of such things.

Yet the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press reports the Monica Lewinsky/Bill Clinton investigation barely made the top ten among the stories that Americans said they were “following very closely” in 1998. The top three stories they were interested in, according to a Pew poll of 805 adults interviewed December 19 to 21, were the school shootings in Jonesboro, in Oregon, and at the Capitol. Wars, elections, and the weather also were of more interest than the scandal. The impeachment vote itself “was a non-starter to the American public,” the Pew Center reported. More people watched the CBS telecast of the New York Jets-Buffalo Bills football game on the Saturday of the

impeachment vote in the House than watched the actual vote on ABC and NBC.

That disjunction does not mean the press is neither “accountable” nor “responsible,” as Schlesinger charged, but just that the press attached more importance to the story than the public did. That happens all the time. The efforts at campaign-finance changes is just one example.

Good editors and editorial writers and executive producers — unlike many politicians — follow their brains and their instincts, not the polls. And no edi-

tor or producer can deny the constitutional, political, and personal importance of this story. Indeed, the responsibility of the press, as Yale law professor Stephen Carter said, “is not to give the American people what they want. It is, instead, to give people what they need.”

Today more than ever they need facts and editorial judgment. For increasingly, speculation and rumor are flowing into our homes through the Internet and the all-news cable channels. We do not know whom to believe or what to believe as we dredge up Drudge-like information on the Internet and watch the cable channel chatterboxes.

All of this is made far more complex by the democratization of gossip. In the old days, gossip about the Washington insiders was limited to those insiders. The elite who dined in the salons of Georgetown knew who in Washington was a drunk, an adulterer, an idiot. Today, those salons have moved into our houses.

The shift started in 1982, when Roone Arledge of ABC resuscitated a Sunday morning show called *Issues and Answers* by expanding it to an hour and hiring David Brinkley from NBC. NBC’s *Meet the Press* followed, bringing in aggressive reporter Tim Russert and then expanding the show to a full hour. Politicians began clamoring to get on the shows because it increased their visibility, and reporters began competing to be guests because it pleased their publishers and raised their speaking fees. So the politicians and

OPINION

reporters started coming up with tidbits of gossip and inside information that would make them more attractive to the bookers.

This has made Sunday mornings far more fascinating and informative, but it has also put the viewers in the same boat as the Internet surfers: They must become their own editors, establishing their own hierarchy of news, determining their own levels of trust in various sources, and setting up their own methods for separating the wheat of fact from the chaff of rumor. Suddenly, the viewer and the surfer have to be able to recognize and interpret political spin. This is difficult even for an experienced editor. So, thank heavens for the journalists who can do this well.

In my view as an editorial writer, the *New York Times* editorial page did this well. I read every one of the 42 editorials that the *Times* published on the scandal and the impeachment debate in the second half of 1998. Their drumbeat — severe on Clinton, protective of democracy — was as cogent as it was ceaseless and consistent. Remember: *USA Today*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, and other major newspapers rushed to judgment and urged that Clinton resign. Meanwhile, the *Times* was merciless in its criticism of his behavior. ("Bill Clinton failed in his duties to the Presidency. He lied under oath. His private character is deeply flawed.") But it was unyielding in its view that that behavior was not a high crime against the nation. It consistently argued against impeachment and in favor of censure. And it was as tough on Kenneth Starr and House Republican bigwig Tom DeLay as it was on Clinton.

Critics fault the press in general with somehow going easy on Starr, not fully reporting his tactics or his politics or his zealotry. The implication is that the press was leaked juicy stuff from the team of the rogue prosecutor and thus gave it a free pass. That, of course, is ridiculous — it's precisely because of the press that we know of Starr's tactics and his politics and his zealotry. Look, for instance, at the piece by Lars-Erik Nelson in *The New York Review of Books* of November 11. He wrote: "If the Starr group's behavior does not rise to Gestapo tactics, it recalls that rascally police detachment on the island of Grenada that, until it changed its name

to Volunteers of the Defense of Fundamental Liberties, was called the Night Ambush Squad." As *The Wall Street Journal's* Murray said, Starr clearly was not handled with kid gloves: "The man's reputation has been damaged a lot by the press."

The press is held "in low repute" these days, said Schlesinger, and perhaps it is. A Pew Research Center poll of 1,203 adults in February found that 38 percent of them believed that news organizations are generally immoral, nearly triple the percentage who believed that in 1985.

The Freedom Forum's Media Studies Center this January asked 1,000 people to rate the coverage of five stories: the impeachment of Clinton, the Y2K computer problem, changes in U.S. policy toward Cuba, U.S. military action in Iraq, and the labor dispute in the National Basketball Association.

Of those polled, 57 percent said the press did an excellent or good job on the impeachment story. Here's how the other stories rated: Iraq, 60 percent; the NBA, 48 percent; Y2K, 44 percent; Cuba, 25 percent. Perhaps more telling, 24 percent of those polled rated the press excellent on its impeachment coverage. The others: Iraq, 13 percent; NBA, 9 percent; Y2K, 8 percent; Cuba, 4 percent.

Alas, in another Media Studies Center survey in March, only 40 percent of those polled rated the coverage of the Clinton/Lewinsky story as excellent or good. At the same time, anywhere from 61 percent to 63 percent said that President Clinton, Monica Lewinsky, and Kenneth Starr had been fairly covered by the press. Robert Giles, executive director of the Media Studies Center, said, "As far as the public is concerned, the news media did not play favorites on this story."

Throughout, both the AP and *The New York Times* stuck to their standards. The AP, for instance, adhered to its corporate-wide rule about anonymous material: it must be unobtainable on the record, it must be fact, it cannot be opinion, and it must move the story ahead.

The *Times*, similarly, held to its policy. Washington bureau chief Michael Oreskes described it in a talk to his paper's managers: "Sources had to have direct knowledge of the information they were telling us. We needed at least

two clearly separate sources — not, for example, two people in one office. Another news outlet could not count as one of those sources."

And both were quaintly modest. The AP, for instance, didn't write about the infamous incident involving Clinton, Lewinsky, and the cigar when the story was "being pushed by Republican sources," says bureau chief Johnson. "When we had verification from the right sources, we found a way to put a reference into the copy without being too specific about it." When the Starr report came out, the AP flagged for its members every take that had references that might be offensive to readers.

It's odd, in a way, how this yearlong story has brought such wrath upon the press. On inspection, many of the charges seem based on the ideology of the charger. Others were aimed at the new "journalists" of the Internet. Says Oreskes: "Newspapering is a good life . . . but . . . I'd like to be known for my own sins and not for Matt Drudge's." Still other charges came from sweeping conclusions based on occasional sin — particularly the sins of those newspapers that reported an eyewitness to a Clinton-Lewinsky tryst.

In fact, the reporting by the AP and *The New York Times* and, for the most part, by CNN and the over-the-air networks on their nightly news shows was thorough and fair and accurate.

The fact that the public wasn't very interested in the story is immaterial. This was a huge story, swirling in a new atmosphere, but it was the old media using the old rules that carried the day. "It was an unavoidable story, a real story," says Oreskes, "one that tested us and in the end allowed us to show exactly who we really are and why having a news organization worried about what's 'fit to print' matters even more in the age of Matt Drudge than it did in the age of Joseph Pulitzer."

At least, as seen by this editor in the Heartland, the newspeople and the editorial people of the mainstream press performed valiantly and expertly. Their performance should not be diluted by lumping them with the cable babblers whom nobody watches or heeds, or by ascribing to them or their peers furtive motives generated by the seminar and cocktail crowds. ■

REPORTING

TACKLING THE Y2K STORY

BY LOUIS S. RICHMAN

It's a brooding gray day, and we're on location in a muddy field outside Columbus, Ohio, with reporter Cathy Donahue of NBC affiliate WCMH. Donahue has introduced us to a woman she calls Peggy, who is telling NewsChannel 4 viewers how she and her husband are preparing for the Year 2000 computer problem. The couple have sold their investments and most of their belongings, and Peggy's husband has quit his job to build a tiny cabin on the secluded site and stock it to self-sufficiency with several months' supply of food. "We want to be in a more safe and secure location," Peggy explains.

— Report aired on WCMH
March 11, 1999



2000

What a story! Over the coming months, climaxing at the stroke of midnight on New Year's Eve, a hidden time bomb could cause computers to crash. Lights go off, transportation grinds to a halt, financial markets collapse, and maybe some Russian ICBMs are let loose. Details at 11!

Then again, maybe nothing much at all will happen come next January 1, save, perhaps, a New Year's Day hang-over. What's all the fuss?

Covering the Year 2000 computer problem is a formidable challenge for journalists in our sound-bite age. The Y2K story is, after all, essentially a drawn-out saga about thousands of anonymous technicians burrowing through billions of lines of software and tiny look-alike microchips in search of digitally deficient date commands that need fixing. *Ho-hum.*

But there may not be many stories as important to demystify. As John Koskinen, the Clinton administration's point man for the government's Y2K remediation efforts, told an audience of journalists at a Freedom Forum symposium: "The less the public knows, the more people naturally assume the worst."

The press has the responsibility to address some big questions — and the answers may change from day to day: Will bank automated teller machines work? Will it be safe and convenient to travel over the New Year holiday? Will

Louis Richman is the financial editor of Consumer Reports.

Y2K ON THE WEB

Government Sources

National Association of Counties
www.naco.org/programs/infotech/y2k/index.cfm

Tracks county government progress in Y2K remediation. A crucial source for local beat reporters, since counties are the least prepared — and potentially the most important — link in the Y2K readiness chain. Its recent survey found that half of all counties had no year 2000 program.

Year 2000 Sites for U.S. States and Canadian Provinces
members.aol.com/truttraffic/usstates.htm

A one-stop list of links to all state- and provincial-level remediation efforts.

General Services Administration www.itpolicy.gsa.gov/mks/yr2000/y2khome.htm

The government's "Gateway for Year 2000 Information Directories" document best practices for Y2K remediation and offer help to communities and citizens trying to assess their Y2K readiness. The GSA provides links to free information from all relevant government agencies.

President's Council on Year 2000 Conversion
www.y2k.gov/java/index.htm

The information clearinghouse for the Clinton administration's Y2K coordination efforts. Links to official activities sponsored by the council for small business and consumers, along with remediation status reports and surveys that the council produces.

Senate Special Committee on the Year 2000 Technology Problem
www.senate.gov/~bennett/y2k.html

The congressional Y2K committee chaired by Senator Robert Bennett (R-Utah) discusses federal agency progress in remediating the government's mission-critical systems at the Federal Aviation Administration, the Food and Drug Administration, and other key cabinet departments and regulatory agencies.

Food and Drug Administration's Center for Devices and Radiological Health
www.fda.gov/cdrh/yr2000/y2kintro.html

Gives continually updated information on the status of the Y2K compliance of medical equipment and biomedical laboratory gear. This clearinghouse for information provided by companies that manufacture the equipment posts data as it is received; so, this is a good source for journalists covering health care to visit regularly.

Federal Emergency Management Agency
www.fema.gov

Issues updates on the activities of the federal agency that steps in when disasters, natural and manmade, strike. FEMA sponsors workshops for local emergency services managers, providing a sound insight into disaster planning around the U.S.

Federal Trade Commission www.ftc.gov/bcp/conline/edcams/y2k/index.html

The government's consumer watchdog reports on matters relating to citizens' personal finances and offers advice on readiness steps individuals can take.

Health Care Financing Administration
www.hcfa.gov/y2k

The agency that pays Medicare reimbursements posts information about its Y2K readiness on this Web site.

Federal Reserve Bank
www.federalreserve.gov/y2k

The central bank is the overseer of the compliance efforts of the entire banking sector. This Web site is its main information clearinghouse.

Trade Groups
American Assoc. of Airport Executives
y2k.airportnet.org

This site provides an inside look at the mind-bogglingly complex job of ridding airports — arguably the weakest link in the fragile air travel industry — of the Y2K bug. Identifies equipment vendors, examines legislative and

regulatory issues, and offers regular news updates.

Edison Electric Institute www.eei.org/EEI/press/y2k/members.shtml

The industry's leading trade group links to the Y2K Web sites describing the remediation efforts at some 65 electric utilities.

Rx2000 Solutions Institute
www.rx2000.org

A nonprofit organization provides wide-ranging information on solutions to year 2000 problems for health-care professionals and institutions. It also documents best practices in remediation efforts.

General Information

Computerworld www.computerworld.com/res/year_2000.html

In-depth — and in-the-trenches — coverage of the battle against the millennium bug by businesses and by governments. Sophisticated, yet accessible, discussions of the technology of Y2K for the technologically naive, plus smart analysis of how Y2K affects legal liability, relations between suppliers and customers, and industry competition.

Stanger's Review of Y2K Reports
www.y2kreview.com

A smart "webzine" and index of major news reports with analysis and commentary by Larry Stanger, a philosopher and insightful Y2K observer. Provides a searchable archive of past media coverage.

Westergaard Year 2000
www.y2ktimebomb.com

The alarming-sounding Web address notwithstanding, this is one of the most comprehensive and provocative sources of Y2K perspective on the Internet. Daily updates, commentary, media coverage, and Y2K strategies for businesses and individuals.

ZDNet www.zdnet.com/enterprise/2dydk

Online technology publisher Ziff-Davis offers daily updates of breaking Y2K news events. Worth looking in on regularly.

prescription drugs be available? Will local, state, and federal governments be able to provide basic public services?

In fact, Y2K isn't just one story but three different ones.

First, there's the technicians' race against the calendar to prevent the complex interdependent information systems from crashing.

Then there is the story of the contingency plans that businesses, public utility companies, and governments from county seats to Washington are drawing up to minimize Y2K disruptions that do occur.

Finally, there's the all-important story of how communities and citizens react to

these fast-changing developments. A worried public, made anxious by both hype and indifference in the press, could overwhelm the contingency planning by hoarding supplies or liquidating investments. Edward Kelley Jr., the Federal Reserve Board governor who's coordinating the Fed's efforts to protect the banking business against the millennium bug, told the Freedom Forum meeting that the risk of public panic is a bigger potential problem than any disruption Y2K failures are likely to cause.

For journalists, there are traps and snares everywhere. Some key sources are less than candid. Business executives

and public officials involved in the fix-up efforts have the greatest stake in maintaining the confidence of their customers or constituents and giving their story a positive spin. At the other extreme, says Barnaby Feder, who covers the Y2K beat for *The New York Times*: "It's so easy to do stories on the wackos."

Fortunately, more and more media organizations are expanding coverage. (Some, from ABC to The Associated Press, are even limiting or eliminating vacations on or around December 31.)

CNN has increased its Y2K coverage from several spots per day three days a week to five days a week. CNN looks for

local Y2K solutions and describes how they can be applied around the country. In one segment, CNN correspondents and residents in Urbandale, Iowa (population: 26,902), grappled with how to allocate scarce public revenues to address competing — and compelling — Y2K risks in the town's emergency services, government offices, and public works departments. CNN will return to Urbandale throughout the year to follow up on progress, new problems, and lessons learned.

The Washington Post has increased Y2K coverage from just five stories in 1996 to more than 100 in 1998. The *Post*'s Y2K beat team, led by Stephen Barr and Rajiv Chandrasekaran, is covering the story on many levels, reporting on the progress (or lack of it) in addressing Y2K vulnerabilities at the federal agencies and contingency planning by local governments in the District and its suburbs.

In San Antonio, the *Express* summed up the city's Y2K readiness in a seven-part series in January. And, at *The Boston Globe*, a team of forty reporters, under assistant managing editor for special projects John Yemma, asked spokespersons for each of the Bay State's major public-service agencies, utility providers, and big employers the same four questions:

Will your organization's mission-critical computer systems function properly on January 1, 2000? What percentage of your systems are Y2K compliant now? By what date will all of your Year 2000 remediation work be completed? Have you developed contingency plans to minimize disruptions if they occur?

In early January, the paper published the responses from each organization. The *Globe* will publish updates through-

out the year, letting readers know who's on track and who's trailing. Says Yemma: "If you're not sure how much you can trust the information your sources give you, you can at least get it on the record and hold them accountable."

The Internet is especially well suited for covering big, amorphous stories like Y2K. The Web's insatiable demand for fresh content is leading CNN to augment its on-air coverage with frequent online updates that add context and detail. In late March, for example, CNN published on its Web site (www.cnn.com/TECH/specials/y2k/) an Associated Press piece recounting how some federal agencies were claiming "progress" in eliminating their Year 2000 problems not by fixing their systems but simply by dropping some from their lists of ones they had originally described as "mission critical."

Major media outlets from the *Los Angeles Times* to Time Inc.'s Pathfinder online news service are also supplementing their own coverage with links to government and business Y2K Web sites, helping readers find out first hand what organizations on the front lines are doing.

Stories in big media organizations' online archives can be retrieved by subscribers who enter key words describing the subject matter that interest them. Web sites like Westergaard Year 2000 and ZDNet provide continuing updates of Year 2000 remediation efforts of industries and governments around the world — a good starting point for journalists. Indeed, some of the most provocative perspectives on Y2K exist only in cyberspace. For a guide to the best Internet sources, see Y2K ON THE WEB, on the facing page. ■

WHAT ABOUT YOUR OWN COMPUTER?

If your PC was manufactured in 1997 or later or if you own any Apple Macintosh, your computer's system software is probably safe. Older computers manufactured as recently as 1995 that operate on Microsoft DOS or Windows system software will likely need a system upgrade or patch to function properly. A patch is a piece of software you can get from the company that made your computer and install yourself to fix Y2K-vulnerable code in the operating system. Contact the manufacturer of your PC for details. If you have any doubts about your system readiness, you can log on to the Web site for the National Standards Testing Laboratories (www.nstl.com). The NSTL lists manufacturers' products by

model number that meet Year 2000 compliance standards and provides a program you can download that will let you test your computer for Y2K problems.

Even if your system software is Y2K ready, you'll want to take extra precautions to protect data files. Also, contact the company that published the software to determine whether the date-sensitive applications software you use — such as for scheduling or finances — is compliant. Again, the software publisher can help you with patches or upgrades. As an extra precaution, make backup disks and hard copies of all your important data files and continue to update them throughout the year.

THE CENTER
ON CRIME,
COMMUNITIES
& CULTURE

CRIME & COMMUNITIES MEDIA FELLOWSHIP

THE FELLOWSHIP

The Center on Crime, Communities & Culture of the Open Society Institute seeks journalists to cover in-depth stories on issues related to incarceration in the United States. The Center seeks projects focusing on, but not limited to, such issues as crime prevention, sentencing reform, and community corrections. The Center will fund journalists for six months to a year to cover one or more such stories. The Crime & Communities Fellowship award is \$50,000 for projects lasting one year.

WHO SHOULD APPLY

Print, TV, radio and photojournalists with 3 or more years of experience are invited to submit proposals. Fellows will be required to produce publishable or broadcast-ready works. The Center encourages, but does not require, participation by applicants' employers. Letters of commitment from editors and producers to consider publishing or airing works are also required. Fellows may begin their projects after February 2000.

ABOUT THE CENTER

The Center on Crime, Communities & Culture of the Open Society Institute seeks to create a better understanding of and support for effective and humane responses to crime in order to enhance the safety of all communities. The Center supports innovative programs and research in criminal justice and public safety and provides fellowships to people committed to becoming leaders in the field. The Center seeks projects representing a variety of viewpoints and is committed to protecting the integrity and independence of each Fellow's work.

For further information
and an application form please
check our website: www.soros.org/crime/ or
call Miriam Porter at (212) 548-0146 or
E-mail mporter@sorosny.org

Crime & Communities Media Fellowships
The Center on Crime, Communities &
Culture
400 West 59th Street, 3rd Floor
New York, New York 10019

Deadline: July 30, 1999

WHEN THE TRUTH WAS PUBLISHED,

THE CITIZENS OF MIAMI

(AND THE MIAMI HERALD

WON THE PULITZER.

Knight Ridder would like to congratulate The Miami Herald for winning the 1999 Pulitzer Prize for Investigative Reporting. The Pulitzer went to The Herald for its series, *Dirty Votes: The Race for Miami Mayor*.

This series was founded on the most idealistic of journalistic notions: Publish the truth, despite the obstacles, and society wins. The Herald proved that principle anew as it exposed vote fraud in the 1997 election.

The obstacles: a hostile city administration, a public campaign accusing the paper of ethnic bias and attempted intimidation. Resolve overcame the hostility. Computers, reporters and belief in the First Amendment did the rest. Through computer

analysis and shoe-leather reporting, reporters documented hundreds of phony, tainted or illegal ballots.

These included a dead voter, city employees who voted despite living elsewhere, ballots cast in voters' names without their knowledge, ineligible out-of-city voters, felons who voted illegally and voters paid to vote.

Results have been dramatic since the paper brought the truth to light. The courts overturned the election and appointed the defeated candidate mayor of Miami. There have been 26 arrests so far. And the Florida

Legislature tightened laws and increased punishments for vote fraud.

We're extremely pleased that The Herald won the Pulitzer as well as this year's Goldsmith Prize for Investigative Reporting. And we're so very proud of the reporters and editors whose incredible efforts won back City Hall for the citizens of Miami.

Knight Ridder. What a difference a newspaper can make.

CAROLLO
FOR
MAYOR



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We're local,
coast to coast,
in newspapers...

- The Philadelphia Inquirer
- Detroit Free Press
- The Miami Herald & el Nuevo Herald
- San Jose Mercury News
- The Kansas City Star
- The Charlotte Observer
- Fort Worth Star-Telegram
- Saint Paul Pioneer Press
- Contra Costa Newspapers
- Philadelphia Daily News

- Akron Beacon Journal
- The (Columbia, S.C.) State
- Lexington (Ky.) Herald-Leader
- The Wichita (Kan.) Eagle
- The Macon (Ga.) Telegraph
- Tallahassee (Fla.) Democrat
- The (Wilkes-Barre, Pa.) Times Leader
- Duluth (Minn.) News-Tribune
- Belleville (Ill.) News-Democrat
- Columbus (Ga.) Ledger-Enquirer

- The (Biloxi, Miss.) Sun Herald
- The (Fort Wayne, Ind.) News-Sentinel
- The (Myrtle Beach, S.C.) Sun News
- Bradenton (Fla.) Herald
- Grand Forks (N.D.) Herald
- The (San Luis Obispo, Calif.) Tribune
- The Monterey County (Calif.) Herald
- State College (Pa.) Centre Daily Times
- Aberdeen (S.D.) American News
- The (Warner Robins, Ga.) Daily Sun

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THE NATIONAL MAGAZINE
AWARDS FINALISTS

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GOLD BATON

NOVA

For five programs and consistently outstanding science reporting, as exemplified by Coma.

SILVER BATON

ABC News *Nightline* and Ted Koppel
Crime & Punishment

Laura Angelica Simón, Tracy Trench, and P.O.V.
Fear and Learning at Hoover Elementary, on PBS

WRAL-TV, Raleigh, and Stuart Watson
A series of Investigative Reports on Military Medicine

WEWS-TV, Cleveland, and Bill Sheil
Final Mission: The Wilton Erickson Story

CBS Evening News, Eric Enberg and Vince Gonzales
Tomb of the Unknowns

Dan Collison, Rebecca Perl, Tom Jennings and *This American Life*
Scenes From a Transplant, on Public Radio International

Raymond Henderson, Tony Buba, and the Independent Television Service
Struggles in Steel: A Story of African-American Steelworkers, on PBS

WBBM-TV, Chicago, and Carol Marin
Coverage of Congressman William Lipinski's Primary Campaign

CBS News *60 Minutes* and Mike Wallace
Investigation of the International Pharmaceutical Industry

WMAQ-TV, Chicago, and Renée Ferguson
Strip-Searched at O'Hare

Vanessa Roth and Thirteen/WNET, New York
Taken In: The Lives of America's Foster Children on PBS

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■
"SHOT THROUGH THE HEART"

■
"THE LARRY SANDERS SHOW: FLIP"

HBO

CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE IN JOURNALISM AND THE ARTS

JOURNALISM

PUBLIC SERVICE

- Awarded to *The Washington Post* for its series that identified and analyzed patterns of reckless gunplay by city police officers who had little training or supervision.
- Also nominated as finalists: *The Boston Globe* for the work of Dolores Kong and Robert Whitaker, and *The Philadelphia Inquirer*.

BREAKING NEWS REPORTING

- Awarded to *The Hartford Courant* Staff for its clear and detailed coverage of a shooting rampage in which a state lottery worker killed four supervisors then himself.
- Also nominated as finalists: *The Jonesboro (AR) Sun* Staff, and *The Miami Herald* Staff.

INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING

- Awarded to *The Miami Herald* Staff for its detailed reporting that revealed pervasive voter fraud in a city mayoral election that was subsequently overturned.
- Also nominated as finalists: Alix M. Freedman of *The Wall Street Journal*, and Fred Schulte and Jenni Bergal of the *Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*.

EXPLANATORY REPORTING

- Awarded to Richard Read of *The Oregonian*, Portland, for vividly illustrating the domestic impact of the Asian economic crisis by profiling the local industry that exports frozen french fries.
- Also nominated as finalists: Tom Brune of *The Seattle Times*, and William Carlsen and Reynolds Holding of *The San Francisco Chronicle*.

BEAT REPORTING

- Awarded to Chuck Phillips and Michael A. Hiltzik of the *Los Angeles Times* for their stories on corruption in the entertainment industry, including a charity sham sponsored by the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, illegal detoxification programs for wealthy celebrities, and a resurgence of radio payola.
- Also nominated as finalists: Barton Gellman of *The Washington Post*, and Blair Kamin of the *Chicago Tribune*.

NATIONAL REPORTING

- Awarded to *The New York Times* Staff, and notably Jeff Gerth, for a series of articles that disclosed the corporate sale of American technology to China, with U.S. government approval despite national security risks, prompting investigations and significant changes in policy.
- Also nominated as finalists: Chris Adams, Ellen Graham, and Michael Moss of *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The New Orleans Times-Picayune* Staff.

INTERNATIONAL REPORTING

- Awarded to *The Wall Street Journal* Staff for its in-depth, analytical coverage of the Russian financial crisis.
- Also nominated as finalists: David Hoffman of *The Washington Post*, and *The New York Times* Staff.

FEATURE WRITING

- Awarded to Angelo B. Henderson of *The Wall Street Journal* for his portrait of a druggist who is driven to violence by his encounters with armed robbery, illustrating the last effects of crime.
- Also nominated as finalists: Tom Hallman Jr. of *The Oregonian*, Portland, and Eric L. Wee of *The Washington Post*.

The Pulitzer Prizes

Awarded by Columbia University on the recommendation of
the Pulitzer Prize Board

WE'RE HONORED

The 1999 Pulitzer Prize for Breaking News Reporting

The Courant is honored to receive the 1999 Pulitzer Prize for Breaking News Reporting. It recognizes our in-depth coverage of the tragic events that took place on March 6, 1998, at state lottery headquarters, when a gunman killed 4 co-workers before turning the gun on himself.

The award honors our comprehensive reporting, the forcefulness of our writing and the photography that captured the drama and emotion of the day, all accomplished under deadline pressure.

The many reporters, photographers and editors responsible for our coverage take great pride in this award, the highest in American journalism.

It is an honor for all employees of The Courant.

But we accept it, ever mindful that the families, friends and communities of the victims still feel the pain and great loss.

✻

In honor of their memory,
The Hartford Courant will donate
the monetary portion of the prize
to the families of the victims of the lottery shooting -

Otho R. Brown

Linda Blogoslawski Mlynarczyk

Frederick T. Rubelmann, III

Michael T. Logan

Hartford Courant.

SINCE 1764

A PULITZER PRIZE WINNING NEWSPAPER

 A Times Mirror
Newspaper

COMMENTARY

- Awarded to Maureen Dowd of *The New York Times* for her fresh and insightful columns on the impact of President Clinton's affair with Monica Lewinsky.
- Nominated as finalists: Nat Hentoff of *The Village Voice*, and Donald Kaul of *The Des Moines Register*.

CRITICISM

- Awarded to Blair Kamin of the *Chicago Tribune* for his lucid coverage of city architecture, including an influential series supporting the development of Chicago's lakefront area.
- Nominated as finalists: Henry Allen of *The Washington Post*, Gail Caldwell of *The Boston Globe*, and Justin Davidson of *Newsday*, Long Island, N.Y.

EDITORIAL WRITING

- Awarded to the Editorial Board of the *Daily News*, New York, N.Y., for its effective campaign to rescue Harlem's Apollo Theatre from the financial mismanagement that threatened the landmark's survival.
- Also nominated as finalists: Fred Hiatt of *The Washington Post*, and Lawrence C. Levy of *Newsday*, Long Island, N.Y.

EDITORIAL CARTOONING

- Awarded to David Horsey of the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*.
- Also nominated as finalists: Clay Bennett of *The Christian Science Monitor*, and Rob Rogers of the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*.

SPOT NEWS PHOTOGRAPHY

- Awarded to the Associated Press Photo Staff for its portfolio of images following the embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania that illustrates both the horror and the humanity triggered by the event.
- Also nominated as finalists: Eugene (OR) *Register Guard* Photo Staff, and Mike Stocker of the *Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*.

FEATURE PHOTOGRAPHY

- Awarded to the *Associated Press* Photo Staff for its striking collection of photographs of the key players and events stemming from President Clinton's affair with Monica Lewinsky and the ensuing impeachment hearings.
- Also nominated as finalists: Daniel A. Anderson of *The Orange County Register*, and Bill Greene of *The Boston Globe*.

LETTERS

FICTION

"The Hours" by Michael Cunningham (Farrar, Straus and Giroux).

DRAMA

"Wit" by Margaret Edson.

HISTORY

"Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898" by Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace (Oxford University Press).

BIOGRAPHY

"Lindbergh" by A. Scott Berg (G.P. Putnam's Sons).

POETRY

"Blizzard of One" by Mark Strand (Alfred A. Knopf).

GENERAL NON-FICTION

"Annals of the Former World" by John McPhee (Farrar, Straus and Giroux).

MUSIC

"Concerto for Flute, Strings and Percussion" by Melinda Wagner.

SPECIAL CITATION

Bestowed posthumously on Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington, commemorating the centennial year of his birth, in recognition of his musical genius, which evoked aesthetically the principles of democracy through the medium of jazz and thus made an indelible contribution to art and culture.

The Pulitzer Prizes

Awarded by Columbia University on the recommendation of
the Pulitzer Prize Board



Meet **Dave Horsey**

Pulitzer Prize winner Cartoonist of the Year

We are awfully proud of Dave Horsey. His editorial cartoons have appeared in the P-I and hundreds of newspapers and magazines. Earlier this year, the National Press Foundation named him Cartoonist of the Year and earlier this month, he won journalism's most prestigious honor, the Pulitzer Prize. Here is some of his prize-winning work from 1998.

Enjoy.



"SURE, I'LL TESTIFY TO KEN STARR, BUT ONLY IN A MANNER THAT PRESERVES THE DIGNITY OF THE PRESIDENCY!"



Published in the Seattle Post-Intelligencer January 21, 1998



"...PAULA, KEN, KATHLEEN, MONICA, MR. GINSEBURG, MS. TRIPP -- GOSH! THERE ARE JUST SO MANY FOLKS WHO HELPED MAKE MY PRIVATE LIFE THE NUMBER ONE ENTERTAINMENT OF THE YEAR!!"

Published in the Seattle Post-Intelligencer March 24, 1998

Seattle Post-Intelligencer
A HEARST NEWSPAPER

Voice of the Northwest since 1863

CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE IN MAGAZINES 1999 NATIONAL MAGAZINE AWARD FINALISTS

GENERAL EXCELLENCE

(under 100,000 circ.)

The American Scholar
I.D. Magazine
Lingua Franca
The Oxford American
The Sciences

(100,000 to 400,000 circ.)

American Heritage
Fast Company
Saveur
Teacher Magazine
Technology Review

(400,000 to 1,000,000 circ.)

Condé Nast Traveler
The New Yorker
Outside
SmartMoney

(over 1,000,000 circ.)

Entertainment Weekly
Men's Health
Newsweek
Sports Illustrated
Vanity Fair

(New Media)

Cigar Aficionado Online
People Online
Slate
TheStandard.com
TheStreet.com

PERSONAL SERVICE

Consumer Reports
Glamour
Good Housekeeping
PC World
Town & Country

SPECIAL INTERESTS

Field & Stream
PC Computing
Saveur
Women's Sports & Fitness

REPORTING

The Atlantic Monthly (2 nominations)

Newsweek
The New Yorker
Philadelphia

FEATURE WRITING

The American Scholar
Esquire
GQ
The New Yorker

PUBLIC INTEREST

Audubon
The New Yorker
Rolling Stone
Time
U.S. News & World Report

DESIGN

ESPN The Magazine
Fast Company
Garden Design
I.D. Magazine

PHOTOGRAPHY

Bloomberg Personal Finance
Martha Stewart Living
National Geographic
Rolling Stone
Travel & Leisure
Vogue

FICTION

The Georgia Review
Harper's Magazine (two nominations)
The New Yorker (two nominations)

ESSAYS & CRITICISM

The Atlantic Monthly
Esquire (two nominations)
The Georgia Review
Mirabella
The New Yorker

SINGLE-TOPIC ISSUE

Business Week
Culturefront
The New Yorker
The Oxford American
Saveur

National Magazine Awards

*Sponsored by the American Society of Magazine Editors, administered by
the Graduate School of Journalism at Columbia University*

The New York Times Wins Two Pulitzer Prizes



Maureen Dowd, for distinguished commentary.

Nobody had a better grip on the story of Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinsky than Maureen Dowd. As President Clinton's critics screamed impeachment and his defenders screamed right-wing conspiracy, nobody got to the heart of the story more quickly and more consistently than she did. Unlike many political columnists, she played no favorites and promoted no ideology in her columns. She wrote about the year's biggest story with radical independence, keeping her nerve and footing while avoiding propaganda or partisanship. She dissected the scandal, its participants and its meaning with style as well as insight, with a faultless instinct for hypocrisy in high places, and with a genius for seeing what the political spin was saying about the spinners themselves. Her work was that of a journalistic original operating at the very top of her game.



Jeff Gerth, lead reporter

The New York Times, for distinguished reporting on national affairs.

Last April, The New York Times, with its veteran investigative reporter Jeff Gerth as the lead team member, broke one of the most significant national security stories of the decade. The article, by Gerth and Raymond Bonner, detailed a Federal investigation into whether two aerospace companies had improperly shared with China crucial expertise needed to build better nuclear missiles. The reporters disclosed that President Clinton had approved further technology exports over the objections of career prosecutors trying to build a case against the two companies.

Gerth, whose investigative career includes the original coverage of Mr. Clinton's Whitewater land dealings, stayed with the China story throughout the year, working on his own and with other reporters — including David Johnston, David E. Sanger, Eric Schmitt and Don Van Natta. In a series of articles written by Gerth individually and with others, The Times documented how the Democratic Party's newest financial backers — high-tech entrepreneurs — had lobbied the Administration to change the rules, and how the President had brushed aside the objections of his Secretary of State to give the pro-trade Commerce Department the deciding voice in approving exports of items like satellites. The articles had a lasting and profound effect on American foreign and trade policy, prompting Congressional hearings and tighter controls on technology exports.



The New York Times
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MAGAZINES

THE FULLER EFFECT

A Hot Flash from Glamour: Sex Sells. But Sells What?

BY ESTHER DAVIDOWITZ

Sex. Sex. Sex. Sex. Kiss. Lick. Moan. Swoon. Do I have I your attention? That's how Bonnie Fuller gets her readers' attention, too.

In September, when the music stopped in the latest dance around the editors' chairs at women's magazines, Fuller, 42, landed in the top seat at *Glamour*. Condé Nast Publications enticed her away from its archival, Hearst Magazines, where in a mere eighteen months she had done what the corporate heads of both companies had to notice: she had made *Glamour's* number one competitor, *Cosmopolitan*, even more successful. (Newsstand sales rose 8 percent during her tenure.) She already had even better runs at two other magazines. While Fuller ran it, circulation nearly doubled at *YM*, Gruner + Jahr's popular teen magazine, between 1989 and 1994. Then she was chosen to launch the U.S. edition of *Marie Claire*, a Hearst joint venture with the title's French publisher, Marie Claire Album. On her two-year watch it became that rare thing in the world of new magazines in the women's field: a quick and large success.

But these titles weren't *Glamour*, the young women's magazine with the strong journalistic reputation. *Glamour*, after all, has won more awards, including

Esther Davidowitz is a free-lance writer.

two National Magazine Awards, than any other women's magazine. *Glamour* published big, serious features. *Glamour* ran thoughtful, provocative essays. *Glamour* even covered Washington (well before it got sexy) — and every month, no less. *Glamour* took the lead on social issues, such as abortion and the women's movement. In 1968, it was the first major women's magazine to feature an African-American woman on its cover.

Now what? Will Fuller dumb it down? Heat it up? For goodness sake, hasn't she already? Among Fuller's immediate changes: She dropped the monthly Washington coverage (a column titled "Women in Washington") and added a new horoscope ("You asked for it!" the coverline declares. "Psychic details you need for your love, lust and work life.")

The result of her work? Fuller's first issue, in January, sold 1.3 million newsstand copies — 16.2 percent more than the January issue last year, Condé Nast reports. It was the best-selling January issue in a decade, in fact, and the best overall seller since September 1996.

Publishers tend to notice these kinds of results, and they try to duplicate them. One of Fuller's *Cosmo* deputies, Mark Golin, went to Dennis Publishing's *Maxim*, a men's magazine known for beer



and babes (April's lead coverline: "Tongue Twist Her: How to Kiss Her Where It Counts"). Then in April, in a *Glamour*-like move, Condé Nast put him in the top job at *Details*, its somewhat more thoughtful and sophisticated men's magazine.

Are we about to witness what might be called The Fuller Effect? Is what Fuller and her followers tend to do — more visuals and fewer words, more celebrities and fewer serious articles, more sex and less substance — changing the magazine world?

When it was announced last summer that Fuller would replace Ruth Whitney, *Glamour*'s revered editor-in-chief for thirty-one years, the news created such a fuss among media critics you would have thought that Jerry Springer had just replaced Dan Rather. Whitney complains too. "In all her past jobs," she says, "Fuller has never done serious journalism."

What Fuller has brought to the ever-more bottom-line oriented world of magazine journalism is, fellow editors and media observers acknowledge, a keen instinct for what sells. Clare McHugh, who was Fuller's executive editor at *Marie Claire* and today is deputy editor of the recently launched *Sports Illustrated for Women*, says Fuller "understands better than anyone else what women want." Care to guess what at least some of that is?

"The secret to her success is a three-letter word," says Steven Cohn, editor in chief of *Media Industry Newsletter*.

Fuller didn't exactly discover sex, of course. Credit for that should go to her predecessor at *Cosmopolitan*, Helen Gurley Brown, who now serves as editor-in-chief for *Cosmo*'s thirty-seven international editions. Brown agrees. "I used to say that I had sex all to myself," she says, "and then the other women's magazine editors started getting smart."

The women's magazines aimed at a somewhat older audience, including *Good Housekeeping*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, and *Family Circle*, present a collection of articles about relationships, recipes, and serious topics. But the magazines aimed at the twenty-or-maybe-thirty-something set seem to have jumped into bed. Even Whitney's *Glamour* hardly eschewed sex. The lead coverline in her last issue read: "The Foreplay Report: Steamy Little Secrets to

Boost Your Bliss." In the last ten years or so, many women's magazines in general have gotten more racy, more raunchy — "hotter," as Brown puts it, at least in the text. Readers don't seem to mind graphic words, but they tend to draw the line at sexy pictures. "No nipples, for example,"

"I USED TO GET MY PORN FROM SEX MANUALS, NOW YOU CAN GET IT IN THE WOMEN'S MAGAZINES"

— Ellen Willis

reports Elizabeth Crow, *Mademoiselle*'s editor-in-chief.

Still, the words seem to do the job. "I used to get my porno from sex manuals," says Ellen Willis, who teaches journalism at New York University, "Now you can get it in the women's magazines." But Willis is not complaining. Nor, presumably, are millions of other women who buy and read the magazines. "There is an acknowledgment that women want sex," Willis says, "and have a right to it."

The difference under Fuller is in the tone and manner. Fuller's first coverline for *Glamour* read: "Doing It! 100 Women's Sexual Agendas — Who Wants What, How Bad and How Often." Inside, one headline encourages readers to "Go Ahead, Play Nooky Hooky." Fuller's February issue ran a brief item on the best way to have sex in a car: "For a backseat quickie, push the front seat completely for-



ward, have your boyfriend sit facing front and straddle him . . ." (About this short item, one ex-*Glamour* staffer asks rhetorically, "Now, is this really a piece of service mature women need?") April included a full-page photo of a woman in underwear standing on a bed with a topless man between her feet, illustrating "How to Misbehave in Bed and Not Feel Bad One Bit." (The issue also includes "How to Get Extreme Desire Back into Your Love Life." If that doesn't work, there's always "Sex Toy Safety" on page 65.)

"Bonnie has vulgarized sex," says Ruth Whitney. "You can see the impact that has made on both women's and men's magazines. Vulgarized sex has always been around. Bonnie has mainstreamed it."

Vulgar, or, as her supporters think of it, frank sex is just one of the arrows in Fuller's quiver. One constant in all her stops has been her creative director, Donald Robertson (one ex-*Glamour* staff member calls him "the other half of her brain"). Together, they can turn a magazine into what both critics and fans alike agree is an unusually effective package, employing tantalizing headlines, arresting visuals, cut-to-the-chase (sometimes sound-bite length) stories, and an irreverent, some say teeny-bopperish tone. And lots and lots of celebrities. Fuller's February issue had more than twice as many celebrity pictures — sixty-two — than the February issue a year earlier.

She didn't invent any of these techniques either, of course, as anyone who has picked up an American newspaper or magazine in the last decade knows. But Fuller does it particularly shamelessly (say the critics) and particularly well (say her fans). She and her staff work hard to get the package just right. Golin of *Details* recalls from his short

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stretch at *Cosmo* having to rewrite a photo caption "six, maybe eight times. It was only four words," he recalls. "I learned from her never to blow off display copy."

But is that all there is? *Glamour* has become "one big grabby headline without articles," says an ex-*Glamour* editor, one of several who left the magazine after Fuller was hired and spoke on condition of anonymity. Says another who quit voluntarily: "She puts shit in a pretty package." "The magazine," says the first ex-editor "has become one big Margarita. But in the end, is that really good for anyone? Are readers learning anything of value?"

Fuller declined several invitations to be interviewed for this story, but she has argued that it is ridiculous to give full credit for her success to savvy packaging and to dismiss her commitment to and skill for serious journalism. She defended herself to *The New York Times* in late March, pointing out that *Glamour* assigns "investigative reporters, who do major articles on women's health issues every single month." Indeed, the April issue contains a well-reported feature on women AIDS survivors and another on the risks of inaccurate Pap smears. Carolyn Kitch, a former

McCall's and *Good Housekeeping* editor who teaches magazine journalism at Northwestern, argues that Fuller has gotten a bum rap. Kitch points out that Fuller's second *Glamour* issue in February not only ran a piece on abortion ("Lifesaving Abortions Denied! Frightening News Every Woman Needs to Know!"), but promoted it on the cover. "That's a pretty commendable thing to do," she says.

Still there's significant evidence that Fuller's *Glamour* has morphed into a sort of *Glamour-lite*. (Into *Cosmo*, some say.) Prettier? Yes. Snappier? Of course. Livelier? No question. Smarter? Oh, well.

It's not as if Whitney's more sober *Glamour* wasn't raking in the big bucks: its profits, Whitney says, were the highest of any of the seventeen magazines in the company, proving that there's a market, a sizeable market, for a smart women's magazine, even one with a dull column on Women in Washington. Whitney admits that that particular column got "low readership." But, she says, "the opposite was true of serious major features." She mentions pieces about the law and rape, pregnant teens, and "How OBGYNs Are Failing Women," among others. "They rated very, very high —

higher than almost anything else in the magazine. We didn't publish big, serious features just to make ourselves feel good. Readers ate them up."

It's just that more readers seem to eat up this new model.

"Today, it's not sufficient to just serve your reader," *Mademoiselle's* Crow says. "Everyone wants to get a piece of her competitors' readership too." One result, she says, is that "more than ever, magazines follow each other. There's a copy-cat phenomenon."

A great many editors argue that magazine readers should be the final judge of what's valuable to publish, and that maybe the critics should lighten up. Crow puts it this way: "If I want to read *Harper's*, I will. If I want a good time and some information on health and relationships, I'll read women's magazines." NYU journalism professor Willis agrees: "These magazines are overwhelmingly about beauty and fashion. They are fantasy, fun."

But critics see that vision as a limited view of what women's magazines can and should be. If the sales of Fuller-like publications keep going up, and Whitney-like editors keep being retired, they say, fun will be all that the readers get. ■

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THE CENTURY IN POLITICAL CARTOONS

From Opper, Minor, and Fitzpatrick to Herblock, Mauldin, and Oliphant, artists have been powerful forces in journalism

BY RICHARD E. MARSCHALL

He was God's gift to cartoonists. Theodore Roosevelt, with his toothy grin and macho exuberance, helped usher in the new Age of the Political Cartoon when he became president in 1901. A decade later, almost every major newspaper in the U.S. had at least one full-time political cartoonist. In 1922, only five years after the Pulitzer Prizes were established, the political cartoon was added to the list of categories.

The portfolio on these pages features the most talented and influential cartoonists of the past hundred years. Not all the artists are household names, even in journalism history courses. But in their day, these artists moved mountains: inciting public debate, dramatizing major issues, afflicting the comfortable.

Political cartoons have a rich history. The *New York Daily Graphic* published them from its first issue in 1873 — some front page, some full-page. Pennsylvania, California, Indiana, Alabama, and New York all introduced anti-cartoon censorship bills in their legislatures around the turn of the century.

Cartoons constitute a journalistic form that has its roots in the powerful art of satirists like Thomas Nast, Joseph Keppler, and Bernhard Gillam in the nineteenth century. (Nast claimed that Tammany Hall once offered him more than \$100,000 to stop drawing.) Those pioneers, with their often ferocious attacks on politicians and policies, mostly caricatured congressional leaders, unelected bosses, and assorted demagogues. Familiar icons included Uncle Sam, the Democrat donkey, the Republican elephant, the Tammany tiger, Old Man Prohibition. Then came the Era of Personality. After Theodore Roosevelt, a

Richard E. Marshall is president of the National Foundation of Caricature and Cartoon Art, and editor-in-chief of Hogan's Alley, the Journal of the Cartoon Arts. He wrote the 269 political cartoonist entries for The World Encyclopedia of Cartoons.



"Yes, Willie, this is Papa's exercising machine. Papa can twist it to beat the band."

Frederick Burr Opper, 1901: Among Opper's most memorable — and devastating — cartoons was a series dubbed "Willie and His Papa." Willie was President William McKinley and Papa was America's big business and monopolies, usually labeled The Trusts.

president's job description included being a lightning rod for artists' satire, leading to a hundred-year gallery of eminently caricaturable faces: Coolidge, FDR, Eisenhower, Nixon, Reagan, Clinton. The political cartoon as a component of daily American journalism is a twentieth century phenomenon.

Technology is one major reason for that. A hundred years

ago, printing techniques made feasible photoengraved line-art mass-produced by letterpress. In 1900, some newspaper artists still scratched their drawings on chalkplates, and the printed cartoons were a confusion of awkward, angular lines. Thereafter, pen-and-ink drawing dominated, as photoengraving became standard in the industry. In the 'teens, many artists shifted to the lithographer's crayon on textured paper, a look that was near-universal until mechanical shading (tones applied chemically to the original cartoon) came along in the late 1960s.

Three cartoonists have been the major stylistic inspirations to political cartoonists over the past hundred years. Robert Minor of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* (and later, the radical press); "Herblock" (Herbert Block) of *The Washington Post*; and Pat Oliphant of Universal Press Syndicate. Minor was one of the first American cartoonists to employ grease crayon on paper. On his family tree are cartoonists who aped his style or used his tools or both: Daniel Fitzpatrick of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, Rollin Kirby of the *New York World*, Boardman Robinson of *The Masses* and the *New York Tribune*, Edmund Duffy of the *Baltimore Sun*, R.A. Lewis of *The Milwaukee Journal*, Ollie Harrington of *The Pittsburgh Courier*, Tom Little of the *Nashville Tennessean*, and Jacob Burck of the *Chicago Sun-Times*.

Homer Davenport of the *New York Journal* often drew a dour President McKinley as a lap dog of his handler, industrialist Mark Hanna, and of venal,



Every Twenty-five Years?

Daniel Fitzpatrick, circa 1938: Midwest liberalism was "Fitz's stock in trade. In his sparse artwork, he usually depicted objects and icons rather than human figures, and seldom caricatured well-known people. This anti-war drawing appeared in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.

rapacious figures representing monopolies. The *New York Evening Journal's* Frederick Burr Oppen sketched Theodore Roosevelt as a manic, infantile Rough Rider on a wooden stick horse. (Edith Roosevelt collected a scrapbook of these drawings to keep her husband humble.) John McCutcheon of the *Chicago Tribune* was gentler than his fellows and frequently labeled his figures, even when the likenesses were dead on. The Hearst papers' Winsor McCay — the cartooning genius who also created the *Little Nemo in Slumberland* comic strip and virtually invented the American animated cartoon — drew as if his cartoons were thundering Old Testament prophecies.

The *Masses* cartoonists — those of the legendary radical magazine of the 'teens, and journals in its leftist tradition —



The Deserter.

Boardman Robinson, 1916: Perhaps the most effective disciple of Minor, Robinson had a varied career. He went to Europe during World War I with John Reed, chronicler of the Russian revolution. He drew for the left-wing *Masses*, for the conservative *New York Tribune*, and free-lanced to the humor magazine *Puck* and *Harper's Weekly*. This cartoon, depicting Christ as war victim, ran in *The Masses*.

were stylists in the Robert Minor vein, but clearly were inspired by the iconoclasm (and grease crayons) of European publications like *L'Assiette au Beurre* and its cartoonists Steinlen, Caran d'Ache, Forain, and others. The *Chicago Tribune* spawned a "school" of artistically consanguine artists (Carey Orr, Joseph Parrish, Ed Holland, S.J. Ray, Calvin Sohm-dal) who were invariably as right-wing as *The Masses* cartoonists were leftists.

When Herblock emerged in the late 1920s with a style borrowed from Jay Norwood "Ding" Darling (*Des Moines Register*) and Vaughn Shoemaker (*Chicago Daily News*), a majority of the profession flocked to his "look." The remarkable Herblock, truly an American institution, is a cartoonist's cartoonist. His style begot an army of imitators. His conceptualizations consistently have ranged from



Army recruiting sergeant:

"At last! The perfect soldier!"

Robert Minor, 1916: He began his career at Joseph Pulitzer's *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, but later in *New York* drew for radical publications like the socialist daily *Call*, and the free-wheeling, free-thinking *The Masses*. Dozens of artists adopted his style. Minor eventually abandoned cartooning, became an official of the U.S. Communist party, and ran for the U.S. Senate.

prescient to devastating. And his career — 1929 to the present — has encompassed most of this crowded century. Australian immigrant Pat Oliphant offered a style totally his own and revolutionary in the field. The Oliphant look — long-faced characters, sparse use of icons and labels, arresting "camera angles" — still dominates the field, at least in the minds of cartoonists who aspire to Oliphant's unflagging brilliance.

Today, amid Oliphant's dark perorations, Jeff MacNelly's (*Chicago Tribune*) elaborate ironies, Mike Peters's (*Dayton Daily News*) absurd reductions, Jim Borgman's (*Cincinnati Enquirer*) cynical barbs, and Tony Auth's (*Philadelphia Inquirer*) mini-murals, the art of political cartooning is changing before our eyes. Contemporary artists often employ central-casting suburbanites (now more common than Uncle Sam, donkeys, or elephants); a television set (with couch potatoes talking back to pols and anchorpersons); and talking heads (the comic strip form, versus the single-panel format, has burgeoned).

Skilled political cartoons can be devilishly funny. But Thomas Nast was at his weakest when he strayed into humor. Joseph Keppler, founder and chief cartoonist of the nineteenth century *Puck* magazine, used righteous indignation far more than humor. The great Homer Davenport (*San Francisco Examiner* and *New York Journal*) wielded a cleaver, not a tickler's feather. He was a bad artist but a great cartoonist: he poorly grasped anatomy and composition, but his ideas often were incendiary bombs. *The Masses* car-

toonists (called "them asses cartoonists" by detractors) — Minor, Robinson, John Sloan, George Bellows, William Gropper — chose to make readers cry, growl, moan, and cheer, but usually not laugh.

Today, however, a pantheon of artists has made humor their main weapon. The tradition in America begins with Benjamin Franklin. Both Franklin and Paul Revere drew cartoons. Revere, a silversmith, engraved pictorial propaganda. In this century, John McCutcheon — for years called the dean of American cartooning — purveyed humor-laced commentary from



"1945-46-47-48-49-50-51-52-53-54-"

Herbert R. Block, 1954: No cartoonist has been as influential — on readers and on his profession — as Herblock. This year marks his 70th anniversary as a political cartoonist. Still active, he turns out four drawings a week for his home paper, *The Washington Post*, and is syndicated to 200 papers in the U.S. and abroad.

his Olympian perch, a wood-paneled studio atop Chicago's Tribune Towers. Also employing the Trojan horse of chuckles were "Ding" Darling and a list of brilliant but mostly forgotten names: James Donahey of Cleveland's *Plain Dealer*, Billy Ireland of the *Columbus Journal-Dispatch*, L.D. Warren of *The Cincinnati Enquirer*.

Currently, Steve Kelley of the *San Diego Union-Tribune* specializes in balloon-dialogs and multiple-panel, comic strip-style cartoons. Some students of the art see contemporary political cartooning as illustrated stand-up comedy. Kelley would find the charge hard to refute: he's a stand-up comic on the side, having appeared on latenight network TV shows. Some cartoonists, including Tom Toles (*Buffalo News*), Dan Wasserman (*The Boston Globe*), and to an extent Jim Morin (*The Miami Herald*) usually draw comic pages-style multi-panel strips in

the manner of Jules Feiffer, a major voice in social/political comment since the 1950s. Since Feiffer began his weekly strips in *The Village Voice* in the 1950s, he has written novels, plays, and screenplays, but remains proudly a cartoonist. His break-the-mold work paved the way for free-lance artists like Edward Sorel, David Levine, and Robert Grossman, whose styles thrive outside of newspaper editorial pages.

Prominent among the few who deal in good old-fashioned outrage is Oliphant, the most consistent of today's artists of the slash-and-burn school. Humor often creeps in but mostly his visions are apocalyptic, his thematic preoccupations somber. In the next wave are partisans like Don Wright (*West Palm Beach Post*) and Wayne Stayskal (*Tampa Tribune*), artists of the left and right respectively who specialize in demonizations of their targets.

Among the influential masters of this century is Art Young, a denizen of *The Masses*, *The Liberator*, *New Masses*, and many obscure leftist publications, who also drew for *The New Yorker*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, and the original *Life*. Even when his fellows drew the seamy side of American life in grease crayon, Young's studied line drawings always exuded amiability. His cartoons got him indicted by the federal government under the Espionage Act during World



Blind man's buff, or Adlai didn't see a communist
Joe Parrish, 1952: In the first half of the 20th century, conservative cartoonists were as numerous as liberal ones. Today they are in the minority. Parrish, of the *Chicago Tribune*, was a clear leader among the right-of-center artists. He depicted Democratic presidential candidate Adlai Stevenson surrounded by accused communists in government.

War I. He indifferently slept through some of the two trials, which ended in hung juries. The challenge to describe the quiddity of his cartoons is illustrated by two of his most famous captions. In one drawing, two young lovers in a slum alley look up at the night sky: "Chee, Annie, look at de stars — thick as bed-bugs!" In another, an exhausted laborer sinks into his kitchen chair: "I Gorry, I'm tired!" and his wife shoots back: "There you go! You're tired! Here I be a-standin' over a hot stove all day, and you workin' in a nice cool sewer!"

Several cartoonists throughout the century have had lives beyond the drawing board. "Ding" Darling, a friend of Theodore Roosevelt and Herbert Hoover, served as director of the U.S. Biological Survey in the 1930s. John McCutcheon went on safaris and cruises to research articles and books. He wrote novels, and was a correspondent in the Spanish-American War and World War I. Bill Mauldin, the brilliant young artist of World War II (his Willie and Joe spoke for millions of GIs) ran unsuccessfully for Congress after the war, and even pursued an acting career briefly when he appeared with war hero Audie Murphy in John Huston's celebrated film, *The Red Badge of Courage*. He was lured back to cartooning in 1958 to succeed Dan Fitzpatrick on the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, where he immediately



"I'm beginning to feel like a fugitive from th' law of averages."

Bill Mauldin: As a young army sergeant in World War II, Mauldin incurred the wrath of General George S. Patton and many other military bigwigs for his depiction of unkempt, war-weary, cynical foot soldiers like Willie and Joe. Millions of folks on the home front came to love Mauldin's characters.

won a Pulitzer Prize; later he worked at the *Chicago Sun-Times*.

Syndication is a plinth of the cartoon trade as the century draws to a close, but it's a mixed blessing. Many artists' work is distributed nationwide and even worldwide, expanding its influence. Yet the prevalence of the syndication system — which allows editors to pay as little as \$40 a week for as many as five cartoons, instead of anteing up a staff cartoonist's hefty salary — curtails the growth of jobs in the profession. Just as bad, from the reader's point of view, is the pick-and-choose implication: staff cartoonists'

the percentage of women and blacks in political cartooning has changed hardly at all. In the 'teens, Lou Rogers (*Judge* magazine) and Edwina Dumm (Columbus, Ohio, *Monitor*) were two of the few prominent female cartoonists. Today, Signe Wilkinson (*Philadelphia Daily News*) and Etta Hulme (*Fort Worth Star-Telegram*) are respected descendants. Black cartoonists over the century have mainly appeared in minority journals — Ollie Harrington and Chester Commodore, for example, in the *Pittsburgh Courier* and the *Chicago Defender*, respectively.

As the century began, cartoonists benefited from a string of technological breakthroughs: from woodcuts to stone-lithography to chalk-plate to photoengraving to letterpress line cuts. In the mid-1970s, Bill Mauldin — partly for convenience, partly to cope with failing eyesight — shifted to drawings with heavy, thick, simple lines that would survive being faxed to his office in Chicago from his studio in Santa Fe. This pioneering method of delivery was received nervously by his editors. Today, some artists compose their art on computers, and many transmit them by e-mail attachments. The cartoon museums of the future will have diskettes hung on the wall between Nast sketches and Rollin Kirby pen-and-crayon originals.

As the century ends, cartoonists' role as advocates, critics, gadflies, and tor-

mentors is up for reappraisal. There's little argument that cartoons of earlier centuries often had far greater impact — triggering revolutions, toppling political machines, and generally turning public opinion upside down. The cartoons of Nast, Keppler, Davenport, and Opper are the gold standard for generating action. In our media-saturated century, however, with all its torrent of opinionizing on cable, broadcasting, and the Internet, many political cartoonists can only dream of having that much clout.

Still, contemporary cartoonists should consider caricaturist Henry Major's admonition uttered in the 1930s that cartoonists sometimes were thrown in jail for things they drew. "American political cartoonists," he added, "should be arrested for things they don't draw." ■

SUGGESTED READINGS

Hess, Stephen, and Milton Kaplan. *The UnGentlemanly Art*. New York, New York: Macmillan, 1975. Remains the best treatment and history of the subject.

Hess, Stephen, and Sandy Northrop. *Drawn & Quartered*. Montgomery, Alabama: Elliott and Clark, 1996.

Zurier, Rebecca. *Art for The Masses*. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Temple University Press, 1989. A superb account of the artists and trends associated with the radical magazine.

Hogan's *Alley* magazine (Box 47684, Atlanta, Georgia 30362) runs articles, essays, and interviews on the subject of political cartoons; V. Cullum Rogers writes a column, "The Moving Finger," on the field.

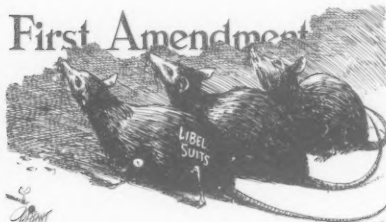
WEB SITES

The Association of American Editorial Cartoonists Web site, including their newsletter of the infra-dig: www.detnews.com/AAEC

A rotating roundup of reprints by many political cartoonists is on www.PoliticalCartoons.com.



Jeff MacNelly, 1978: Drawing from a generally right-of-center perspective, MacNelly (home paper, the *Chicago Tribune*) is one of the few contemporary political cartoonists who can use humor to accentuate, not vitiate, his points. He also produces a comic strip, the popular *Shoe*, and has illustrated books and columns.



Pat Oliphant, 1984: His art has the rare ability to merge outrage and humor. Oliphant turned the cartooning world on its head when he arrived in America from Australia in 1964. He has inspired a generation of cartoonists to imitate his techniques, but nobody has matched his assured graphic sense or the quality of his insights.

views, appearing regularly, can generate the same serial impact as editorials or in-house columns. But editors cherry-picking from a pile of syndicated cartoons may choose ones that merely validate their own prejudices rather than allowing a tough-minded, discriminating cartoonist to speak for himself or herself.

"Himself or herself." After a century,

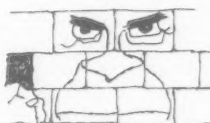
I STONEWALLED THEM ON THE WAR.



I STONEWALLED THEM ON THE TAPES.



I STONEWALLED THEM ON THE COVER UP.



I STONEWALLED THEM ON THE COURTS.



I STONEWALLED THEM ON THE TAXES.



I HAVE NOT YET BEGUN TO STONEWALL.



Jules Feiffer, 1974: Also an author, playwright, and screenwriter, Feiffer uses the comic-strip form for biting satiric commentary on politics and social issues. For years, his home base was *The Village Voice*; now it is through syndication in fifty papers and magazines.

in the public interest

Will Success Spoil Network News?

by Lawrence K. Grossman

The three network news divisions have never been busier. Their newsmagazines now fill a dozen prime-time hours a week on ABC, CBS, and NBC. No longer loss leaders, the network news operations find themselves in the unaccustomed role of making major money for their parent companies. And in the process, they are sounding their own death knell; the future victims of their own remarkable financial success.

60 Minutes executive producer Don Hewitt told what's really happening to network news in his blunt-spoken Frank E. Gannett Lecture last December. The economics of television, Hewitt said, have "in no small measure driven the networks out of the entertainment business, which they used to be very serious about and did very well, and into the news business, which they're not very serious about and don't do very well."

The news business Hewitt was complaining about is not the business of covering the major news of the world, at one time the core of network news and its very reason for being. No, Hewitt was talking about the news divisions' new core business of churning out entertaining real-life stories for their twelve weekly magazine hours. The networks' current strategy, he said, is either to "put on one of those ersatz newsmagazines or go dark" because, "they don't have anything else" to put on the air that works.

The man who invented the television newsmagazine excoriated the networks and their news divisions, including his own, for "Filling Time with Second-Rate Newsmagazines," the title of his talk. They're "scraping the bottom of the barrel" with these shows, he said, "just to keep themselves in business."

Although Hewitt's right about what's happening to network news, he's wrong

about what the economics of television are doing to the networks. It's not the entertainment business the networks are being driven out of but the news business. Their news divisions are likely to go under while the newsmagazines keep the networks afloat.

True, the four hours a week of ABC News's *20/20*, five hours of NBC News's *Dateline*, and three hours of CBS News's *60 Minutes*, *60 Minutes II*, and *48 Hours*, tend to be a big improvement over the failed sitcoms and action dramas they replaced. And the networks' newsmagazines are paragons of quality and taste compared to the syndicated tabloid knockoffs like *Hard Copy*, *Inside Edition*, *Real TV*, and *Entertainment Tonight* that increasingly fill station time days, evenings, and late night.

But for almost half a century, covering the important news of the world was what ABC News, CBS News, and NBC News did for a living. They reigned as the kings of serious and responsible broadcast journalism, the pride of their networks. No longer. Now their bread-and-butter business is producing features for prime-time magazines. Being entertaining and profitable rather than being informative has become the new measure of their success.

The weekly prime-time newsmagazine hours that represent the major output of ABC News, CBS News, and NBC News contain few stories that focus on substantive public issues. During the second week in March, when this column was written, *60 Minutes* featured a piece on physically challenged performers, another on gangsters in the Irish Republican Army, and revisited the area in Alaska where a decade ago, the Exxon Valdez had leaked oil. *60 Minutes II* carried features on the man who invented on-line stock trading, a women's basketball coach with a bad temper, and an old Mike Wallace interview with Oprah Winfrey, updated.

Dateline NBC offered three news recreations: the "City of New Orleans" train crash, the mystery of three missing women hikers, and the frantic rescue of a man who fell through the ice. It told stories about warm and tender crocodiles, a cheerleader accused of murdering her own infant, and the theft of a movie idea. *Dateline* episodes that week also focused on "Suze's secrets of financial success," a Chinese herbal alternative to Viagra, a World War II soldier's secret, a family's "journey from despair to hope" about their sick child, and a new way to treat dogs with emotional problems. *Dateline's* investigations exposed the exploitation of kids who sell candy for charities, and careless care in nursing homes.

The four *20/20* shows reported on an innocent man freed from death row, women doing time in prison, the rise and fall of a powerful church leader, teenagers on a binge, heroic high school rescuers, an amazing little dog, and a portrait of golfer Arnold Palmer in his senior years. *20/20* also focused on federal informants who commit crimes (particularly the case of a pedophile who raped a boy), children who abuse their parents, and the dangers of bacteria accumulating in refrigerated food. Its medical features described the benefits of a new and unorthodox treatment that induces "a good heart attack," and surgeons who've figured out how to extend short people's bones.

48 Hours covered an "unholy feud" between two ministers and a story of "getting even with deadbeat dads."

While pieces such as *60 Minutes's* Exxon Valdez follow-up and *Dateline's* feature on nursing home abuses were useful and even important, not one newsmagazine tackled anything about social security, medicare, medicaid, education, taxes, trade, NATO, China, Russia, Guatemala, Serbia, or Rwanda, all major

Lawrence K. Grossman is a former president of NBC News and PBS.

If Government Doesn't Belong in the Bedroom...

What's it Doing in the Dresser Drawer?

MILLIONS OF LAW-ABIDING AMERICANS OWN FIREARMS.

**If you're not a gunowner yourself, chances are someone you trust is:
a neighbor, a co-worker, a friend or a relative.**

But in the last few years, you've been asked to believe some very dangerous things about your fellow Americans, just because they own guns for protection and recreation. You've been told they're "bad," and "different;" that they're not like you, and that they are responsible for all sorts of things from crime to accidents to the insane behavior of a few individuals.

Because you've been told to believe those things, millions of Americans like you have had their rights denied or delayed, with the excuse that you are being "protected" from other Americans just like you.

In the last few years, most of the action has come in the form of government regulation or interpretation of laws. These regulations have been enacted against Americans not in the sunshine of democracy, but in the shadow of bureaucracy. There is little or no recourse for your fellow Americans. Gunowners are denied one of the most basic rights: the right to state their case, not just to legislators, but to other Americans.

A dangerous new front has now been opened against all Americans with the intention of several big city mayors to abandon their duties to their citizens to find reasonable and just solutions to crime. Instead, these mayors prefer to rely on contingency-fee crazed lawyers uninterested in rights, justice or common sense.

Time after time, statistics by independent researchers have shown that American gunowners are not the problem.

They do not break the law when they seek the legal means to own a gun. They are not, and have never been, the problem. The research shows just the opposite: in states where citizens are accorded the right to own and carry a firearm for personal protection, crime rates are lower—much lower—than in places that enact strict control of law-abiding Americans—places like Washington, DC, and Chicago.

Common sense tells you that if crime flourishes, if rapes, assaults, robberies and even murder, are higher in places that deny people just like you the means to self-protection and the protection of their homes and families, then, at the very least, American gunowners are not the problem. It is a dangerous experiment to remove freedoms, one by one, in exchange for the broken promise of safety.

It's always been easier to blame people, especially if you isolate them with labels and name-calling, for problems that are obviously larger, more complicated, and sometimes even insoluble, than it is to work together at the same time we respect each other and our differences. It can't make sense to ignore existing laws, and instead pile on more and more, never bothering to use the laws for the benefit of society.

If you think gun control isn't people control, think again.

The history of gun control—beginning with the denial of firearms rights to newly freed African-Americans in the post-Civil War South, to those aimed at immigrants at the turn of the last century—is a dangerous, deceitful, un-American history of people control. If laws can be enacted, if regulations can be implemented, without review or recourse against Americans just like you, what and who comes next?

Your friends, neighbors, relatives and co-workers who own guns just want what you want: the safe and secure lives that Americans declared their right over 200 years ago; lives that are not judged by others merely because they "seem different;" the renewed promise of a government that works for the people and respects their judgement, and a fair and open hearing in the court of public opinion.

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issues in the news that week. Nor, of course, was there a single network news prime-time special that shed light on any of those major issues.

Churning out TV magazine stories "that touch your life," to use *20/20*'s defining slogan, is far cheaper and more profitable than covering the news of the world. The latter requires an army of reporters, producers, editors, researchers, and news crews; a multitude of domestic and foreign bureaus, and news desks staffed around the clock.

Newsmagazines, on the other hand, are the least expensive of all the networks' prime-time programs to produce. The average news-magazine costs about \$500,000 an hour, compared with \$800,000 to \$1,000,000 or more a half-hour for sitcoms and dramas. And as the syndicated producers discovered years ago, a television news-magazine doesn't really need to use the resources of a sprawling network news division to get on the air. All it needs is a dedicated production unit of its own. The elite production staffs of *60 Minutes*, *Dateline*, and *20/20* operate entirely apart from the shrinking numbers of far-flung network news troops who cover the important news of the world every day. NBC News recently closed its Tokyo bureau. None of the three networks has full-time staff correspondents stationed anywhere in Africa, South America, Central America, or India.

With daily news reporting no longer the top priority and news documentaries in prime time all but extinct, the networks can save a bundle by sticking with their gold-mine newsmagazines, buying their headline news coverage from syndicated television wire services like AP and Reuters instead of gathering their own, and eventually closing down their expensive news operations altogether. "If it keeps going the way it's going," Hewitt predicted, "a grand and glorious American institution, broadcast journalism, as Americans knew it, relished it and depended on it . . . could all but vanish . . . The kind of tasteful and important journalism that made CBS News, ABC News, and NBC News giants in the news business is, for the most part, gone, and nobody seems to give a damn."

Network news as we once knew it is already all but gone from radio. Now, it's slowly but surely vanishing from television. Hewitt has sounded the alarm. Does anyone still give a damn? ♦

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books

Active Reporter or Passive Conspirator?

by Anthony Marro

It wasn't until right at the end, right as Lucianne Goldberg and Linda Tripp were starting the triple play intended to push the story of the president and the intern into the Paula Jones civil suit, the Kenneth Starr criminal probe, and the pages of *Newsweek* all on the same weekend, that Tripp told Michael Isikoff, the *Newsweek* reporter working the story, that she was trying to negotiate a book deal as well.

This shouldn't have come as a surprise. Goldberg was a book agent, and Tripp had been planning a White House scandal book as far back as 1996. But it sent Isikoff into high dudgeon, angry that it might compromise her credibility and jeopardize the story he was still trying to write, causing him to think: "You're . . . going to muck up my story, you idiot."

And so he set out to persuade them not to do this, later coming to realize that two important things had been happening.

The first was that he had crossed the line from reporter to participant. "I was trying to influence the actions of the players," he writes. "As a reporter, that's not my job. But I didn't realize something else: I was at this point too involved to avoid influencing the players."

The second was that while the book plan shouldn't have been any surprise, it had been "well off my radar screen." He had been too focused on Clinton and Lewinsky to pay full attention to Goldberg and Tripp. "I could not have cared less about their motives or their ultimate goal," he now says. "My interest in them was quite simple and fairly well focused: Was the stuff they were telling me true? Could it be corroborated?"

Anthony Marro is the editor of Newsday. He was a reporter for the Rutland (Vermont) Herald, Newsday, Newsweek, and The New York Times.



Isikoff on January 25, 1998, after his appearance on *Meet the Press*

Would it make a story for *Newsweek*?"

If information is accurate it probably doesn't matter where it comes from. Reporters everywhere and forever have been passing along information without sharing the enthusiasms or goals of their sources. But not understanding goals can backfire dangerously. Not warning readers about motives can make stories seriously incomplete. And one of the lessons in Isikoff's book is that sometimes reporters can focus so intensely on the core of the story that they can miss some of the radar warnings blinking off to the side.

What was on his radar right from the start, from back when he was covering the Justice Department for *The Washington Post*, was the belief that Paula Jones had a story that deserved serious reporting, not something to be discounted just because the anti-Clinton far right was peddling it. Some of his editors were nervous

and some were openly scornful of the whole project. In the end he blew up in anger, was suspended for insubordination, resigned in a huff and in May 1994, moved on to *Newsweek*.

The subtitle is "A Reporter's Story" and it's pretty much

UNCOVERING CLINTON: A REPORTER'S STORY

BY MICHAEL ISIKOFF
CROWN PUBLISHING
304 PPS. \$24

that. It's not to any large degree the story of the broader Starr investigation or the impeachment process or the performance of the press in covering the scandal. Isikoff gives more attention to the supposedly distinguishing characteristics of the presidential penis than to a serious examination of Starr's many probes. Henry Hyde doesn't appear in the index at all. Those looking for an assessment of Steven Brill's com-

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plaint that reporters were co-opted and corrupted by leaks from Starr's office will merely get eyestrain from trying to read between the lines.

Uncovering Clinton is the story of Isikoff's own attempts to document a pattern of sexual recklessness on the part of the president, and of the "culture of concealment" that he says inevitably flowed from it. This began when he came across Clinton aides in the 1992 presidential campaign who were trying to squash the reports of adulterous liaisons that they called "bimbo eruptions." His reporting there later made him think that Paula Jones might be credible. A tip from a Jones lawyer eventually led him to Kathleen Willey, who in turn pointed him towards Linda Tripp. And it was Tripp, along with Goldberg, who put him onto the story of Monica Lewinsky.

This was not a quick journey. It was six years from the "bimbo eruptions" to oral sex in the White House, and along the way he built up an extensive network of sources among people who were working in many different ways and through many different means towards the common goal of hurting, embarrassing, or actually ousting the president. He worked these stories for so long and became so well-connected with so many of the people involved that there are places in this book where it's not clear whether he was an outsider looking in, and insider looking out, or both at once.

Isikoff says that he was never interested in writing about sex for its own sake, and one tends to believe him. He says he kept at it because the allegations against Clinton suggested a recklessness and arrogance that was dangerous when combined with great power, and that required so many lies and so much deceit to keep hidden that it corrupted his presidency.

The president's private weaknesses had led to public wrongs, he now writes, including "lies to the public and to a court, the smearing of innocents, the deployment of an army of hardball litigators, private investigators, and spin doctors whose primary purpose was to smash the accusers and destroy the president's enemies."

This may be a bit overstated. There's little evidence here of enemies destroyed, and no strong evidence of

behavior outside the bounds of well-funded civil suits, which even in the routine of things can become very nasty. And Isikoff acknowledges right up front that many of the Clinton enemies were themselves not pleasant people and not playing softball, but were "mean-spirited and mercenary" as well as zealous.

Isikoff tells his story in a smooth narrative style, with apparent candor and self-deprecating humor. (At one point, having accompanied two sources into a strip club in Dallas and placed a \$20 bill inside the panties of one of the dancers, he confesses having started the night imagining himself Seymour Hersh and ending it feeling more like Geraldo.) He also manages to build a certain amount of suspense, which is no mean feat given that virtually every adult American outside of cloistered convents already knows not only the ending but also most of the details.

It will make a good movie.

The 46-year-old reporter at the center of *A Reporter's Story* comes across as aggressive, persistent, admirable in many ways, difficult to manage and very proud of it, admittedly not above overstating evidence while pitching a story to his bosses, cautious at important points and quick on the trigger at others, careful in documenting his stories and yet capable of playing down things that might undercut his basic reporting. After building his case that Paula Jones should be taken seriously, for example, he then takes the fact that she later changed her story in order to strengthen her lawsuit and relegates it to merely a footnote.

Many reporters who read this will applaud his tenacity, his talents, his feisty manner, and his drive. Many editors will applaud all these same things and then indulge themselves in thinking that editors will always be in demand. Non-journalists might come away understanding that reporting stories isn't as easy as it looks, and that in some of the most intense newsroom debates no one is clearly wrong and everyone has a good point.

This last was true of the debate within *Newsweek* over whether to print Isikoff's initial story about Clinton, Lewinsky, and Starr. Ann McDaniel, the Washington bureau chief, was concerned publication would disrupt an ongoing criminal investigation, something news organizations generally try not to do. Richard Smith,

the editor-in-chief, was worried that they still had no real evidence that Vernon Jordan had done the things Tripp claimed, and that Lewinsky — who they hadn't yet interviewed — might be wandering around in some sort of fantasy world. Mark Whitaker, the then managing editor, later said he felt that he had a "fiduciary responsibility" to insure the credibility of the magazine, and he surely did. Even a magazine as strong as *Newsweek* would have a hard time explaining two "Hitler's Diaries" in one generation. Holding the story probably was the right call.

But Isikoff also was right. The independent counsel had expanded his investigation from land deals in Arkansas to sex and lies in the White House. His agents were trying to wire Lewinsky to run a sting on the president. By any definition this was serious and legitimate news. "Washington will go nuts," he warned his editors. And very quickly, thanks not only to Matt Drudge's Internet alarm system but also to *The Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, ABC News, and some others, the story was everywhere, and *Newsweek* was scrambling to put out its own version via the Internet.

Looking back, that initial Isikoff report holds up fairly well, although it may have given too much weight to Tripp's account of Jordan's involvement and raised almost no questions at all about whether the expansion of Starr's investigation was warranted to begin with. Nor was there any hint of Tripp's role as puppeteer, pulling Lewinsky's strings and virtually writing the script for much of what later would be the obstruction of justice charges.

This brings us back to the question Isikoff raises of himself: Had he become too much of an active player and strayed too far over the line?

On November 21, 1997, Tripp had called him and said that Lewinsky had sent another package to the White House, addressed to presidential secretary Betty Currie but intended for Clinton. By this point Tripp and Goldberg had arranged for Isikoff to get receipts of these deliveries from a messenger service Tripp had persuaded Lewinsky to use and that just happened to be owned by a relative of Goldberg. The package, Tripp said, contained a tape "for phone sex."

It was at this point, he writes, that he realized with more clarity than he had in the past that he "was in the middle of a plot to get the president."

"I was only covering it, of course," he now writes. "Or so I told myself. But I was covering it from the inside, while it was unfolding, talking nearly every week with the conspirators as they schemed to make it happen." Some of these were the kinds of conversations reporters have with sources routinely, he says, but in this kind of situation "the lines between aggressive reporter and passive conspirator can get awfully blurry."

It's true that Tripp and Goldberg saw him as their vehicle for exposing the president. But reporters find themselves in these situations all the time, albeit on much smaller stages and for much lower stakes. It's true that he had forced Starr to move quickly by threatening to interview Jordan and Lewinsky before they even knew they were being investigated. But this isn't unusual either. It happens quite often. And it's true that he was chagrined to discover that he had been relying on anti-Clinton lawyers as sources "even while they concealed from me their role in bringing the Lewinsky allegations to the Jones lawyers and later to Ken Starr." But a reporter who hasn't been misled by sources hasn't worked many stories, and the important issue for himself and his editors is whether the journalism he produced was accurate and fair or whether he had become so beholden to his sources that things ended up tilted their way.

In the end, Isikoff's own book doesn't entirely answer Isikoff's own question, but it suggests that if he had done more aggressive reporting on the active "conspirators" as he now calls them, the question of passive conspiracy probably wouldn't be an issue. This leads to the question of just what, to use his own phrase, was and was not on his radar screen.

The story about Clinton and Lewinsky was potentially so explosive that it's hard to fault him for not focusing on other matters that may have seemed peripheral at the time. But he may have jammed his own radar concerning the work of the "elves," which is the term he now uses for the network of conservative lawyers that worked secretly to help keep the Jones case alive and eventually steered Tripp to both the Jones lawyers and to Starr. The network included George Conway, a New York

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Bartholomew H. Sparrow

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lawyer active in the conservative Federalist Society; Jerome Marcus, a Philadelphia attorney who had done legal work in Ronald Reagan's State Department; Richard Porter, a former aide to Dan Quayle and an associate in the Chicago office of Kenneth Starr's law firm; Ann Coulter, the lawyer and *Human Events* columnist; and others. It was Coulter who first suggested the term to Isikoff, hinting to him that she had great inside knowledge of the strategies being developed by the Jones legal team, and then adding: "There are many of us busy elves working away in Santa's workshop."

A good deal has been written in recent months about these lawyers and their ties to (a) anti-Clinton conservatives, (b) Starr and his investigators, and (c) the Paula Jones legal team. It's now clear that they were major players in helping set the trap that Clinton walked into. But almost nothing was known about them at the time the scandal erupted.

Isikoff says that he now can report on the "elves" and their work, but that interviews back in 1997 and 1998 were obtained with the promise that he not only wouldn't quote them but "wouldn't even refer to them" in his stories. He now describes their activities with great specificity and great detail. But what's not clear is just how much he knew and just when he knew it, and the degree to which he might have handcuffed himself by his early agreement.

This is a question worth noting because back when Hillary Rodham Clinton was charging that there was a right-wing conspiracy out to destroy the president, *Newsweek* was suggesting something quite different. While it presented a large chart listing many of the known conservatives involved in anti-Clinton activities, it said in the same issue (February 9, 1998) that White House attempts to pull together these connections "strained to make the coincidental seem conspiratorial, the mundane seem sinister." And it went on to compare her charges to those made by Senator Joseph McCarthy back in the '50s, a rather harsh comparison given that McCarthy is widely regarded as having made charges that were reckless and malicious, as well as false.

But in *Uncovering Clinton* Isikoff tells about a single day, in November 1997, in which Lucianne Goldberg con-

tacted Porter to urge him to arrange for Linda Tripp to be subpoenaed by the Paula Jones lawyers to testify about Clinton's alleged fondling of Kathleen Willey. Porter then phoned Conway and left on his answering machine the astonishing news that a woman named Lewinsky and "a certain Lothario in the Casa Blanca" had been having oral sex in the pantry. Conway quickly relayed that message back to one of the Paula Jones lawyers with the admonition, surely unnecessary, "Listen, you've really got to focus on this."

In describing this flurry of activity and the events that flowed out of it, Isikoff now says: "The conspiracy, thoroughly right wing, may not have been that vast. But it had done its job."

Public knowledge about this network and the depth of its involvement might not have changed anything at all back in February 1998. Clinton did what he did, and the fact that there was a well-laid trap that had been set by Tripp and Goldberg and the various elves doesn't change the fact that he walked into it. But it might have helped broaden the focus of some of the early reporting, causing the press to concentrate not only on the sex and the lies but also on just what forces had been at work and just how all of this had come into play. This, in turn, might have caused more attention to be focused more quickly than it was and more intensely than it was on the Starr investigation itself.

Any high-powered federal investigation has at least two questions for reporters to try to answer. The first is what has the target actually done and how serious is it? The second is what has the government been doing in building its case? The second often doesn't get as much attention as the first, despite the fact that there's a history of prosecutors running out of control. Even colleagues in the Justice Department considered some of Bobby Kennedy's "Get Hoffa" squad, for example, to be torpedoed who paid scant attention to constitutional rights. Parts of the FBI's "ABSCAM" operation, in which operatives disguised as Arab sheiks paid bribes to congressmen, were widely criticized for having crossed the line from sting operations to entrapments. But in the early days of the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal so much of the reporting was focused so heavily on what Clinton allegedly had done that

little attention was paid to what the government, in the form of Ken Starr, had been doing.

Eventually the criticisms began to build — that Starr had been hauling women and state troopers before an Arkansas grand jury to ask about Clinton's sex life, that his agents had tried to intimidate Lewinsky into not contacting her lawyer by threatening to send her to jail for twenty-seven years and to indict her mother as well, that he had allowed massive leaks to news organizations in an effort to poison public opinion against Clinton, that he had spent four years and \$40 million drilling dry wells and then ended up with a charge that, in the words of Jimmy Breslin, "wouldn't hold up in night court."

There is little serious and sustained reporting about this in Isikoff's book, although he concludes in the epilogue that by grabbing Lewinsky and holding her in the way that they did, Starr's agents had used "the awesome powers of the prosecutor in ways that looked disproportionate and even frightening," causing the investigation to be "flawed from the start." One would have liked more. Having reported the Paula Jones story from the beginning, having become intimately familiar with the Starr operation from its Whitewater days, having covered the Justice Department for a good many years, and having had the access he did to Tripp and Goldberg and many of the conservative lawyers in the confederacy of elves, he was better positioned than most — perhaps uniquely positioned — to tell this whole broader story, to do definitive reporting on whether Starr had been running a normal investigation using just the "traditional and appropriate" techniques that he's claimed, or whether he was an obsessed prosecutor with a staff run amuck.

But it may be that his ties to Starr's investigators are simply too many and too close. It may be that he feels bound by confidentiality pledges made in the past. Or it may be that he considers all of this merely a sideshow, and not essential to the "reporter's story" about Clinton's sexual compulsions and cover-ups he's trying to tell. His book is called *Uncovering Clinton*, not *Uncovering Starr*, and his position seems to be the perfectly legitimate one that any journalists interested in the latter can go write their own. ■

Images of the Unimaginable

by Walter Goodman

Embarking on an inspection of television's treatment of the Holocaust, Jeffrey Shandler finds himself in unsettled, unsettling weather; heavy winds over the power and puerility of the mass media; storms over the significance of Israel and the condition of American Jews; and thunder and lightning over the meaning of the Nazi slaughter of millions.

Shandler is a diligent and perceptive observer, and his book offers as comprehensive a review of a half century of flashing images as one could reasonably expect in a single volume, with perhaps more detail than one requires. The author, who teaches in the Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies at New York University, proves a close watcher of the way television programs are put together and of the impact of both content and construction as he explores how a notoriously unserious medium has dared to take on what he insists on calling the "moral paradigm" of the century's unequalled atrocity.

The chronic issue here, which has faced many less dispassionate observers than Shandler, is whether television can convey the enormity of the Holocaust. Is there not something about the medium that falls short of the seriousness required for such an endeavor? Isn't it destined to fail as so profound a subject is squeezed to suit the small screen and the mercenary industry that has been built around it?

That clash, in somewhat rudimentary form, receives attention early as Shandler brings back a 1953 episode of *This Is Your Life*, described by at least one reviewer as "the weepiest show in television." In what would sound like a burlesque of commercial television's formulas for audience-grabbing if the subject were not so unlaughable, the exceedingly popular NBC show devoted one of its weekly half hours to Hanna Bloch Kohner, a survivor of Auschwitz.

Accompanied by strings and harps, Ralph Edwards, our host, worked his way to an upbeat ending: the camera

closed in on Kohner's face as her brother — from whom she had been separated at the Nazi concentration camp — appeared and she received a charm bracelet and a sample of Hazel Bishop lipstick. "It's a happy day for all of us," announced Edwards. "Out of darkness, of terror and despair a new life has been born in a new world for you, Hanna Kohner."

Shandler dissects the techniques that would serve generations of producers attempting to grapple with what later became known as the Holocaust. The intimacy of the tube, the focus on a single survivor, the close-ups, the use of newsreel clips, the reach for redemption.

Irresistible. Yet as the implications of the murder of millions sunk in, this sort

WHILE AMERICA WATCHES: TELEVISIONING THE HOLOCAUST

BY JEFFREY SHANDLER.
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS.
306 PP. \$30.

of show, with its good old American upbeat liberal ecumenical spirit, not to mention the commercials, became an easy target for critics of television. The gravity, the imponderability of the event, many decided, was not only far beyond the scope of *This Is Your Life* but was insulted by the conjunction, tragedy served up as a feel-good half-hour. And as the years went on, *While America Watches* demonstrates, more serious television efforts to convey the "truth" of the Holocaust, even when based on news rather than entertainment, were routinely dismissed as unworthy of their subject.

Judgment at Nuremberg, Abby Mann's docudrama, originally shown in 1959, merged concentration-camp footage with acting by a high-powered cast that included Melvyn Douglas, Maximilian Schell, Paul Lukas, and Claude Rains, and gave Telford Taylor, a war-crimes prosecutor, a walk-on role as an "imprimatur of authenticity." The American Gas Association, a sponsor, pressured CBS to black out some references to Nazi gas chambers.

Two years later, Americans had an opportunity to see the most famous of the genocidists in person, as Adolf Eich-

Walter Goodman is a television critic for The New York Times.

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mann went on trial in an Israeli courtroom largely for the benefit of the camera. In his longest chapter, Shandler puts this "trial by spectacle" in the context of television news's growing sense of its own effectiveness and the acceptance of the Holocaust (as it came to be called around this time) as a singular event in twentieth century history.

Here, the focus was on one man, whose "inscrutable ordinariness," Shandler writes, "made his presence seem that much more remote." And didn't the one-culprit approach somehow undermine any effort to comprehend the many elements that came together to produce the unimaginable? The most influential blows were from Hannah Arendt, who pounded away at what she called the trial's "theatrics."

Yet those impressed by the reach of the Eichmann trial because it was founded in reality criticized such critics for not giving television a break. Putting down such coverage for being too effective as theater at the same time that it was being criticized for not being effective enough or in the right way seemed a no-win situation for what, after all, was a try at attracting and holding a worldwide audience.

What Shandler rates "the most significant event in the presentation of the Holocaust on American television" came on four consecutive evenings of 1978. He reminds us that by then Vietnam and Watergate as well as steadily developing attention to the Holocaust had served to give the medium confidence in its ability to deal with tough subjects.

The nine-and-a-half hour NBC miniseries, *Holocaust: The Story of the Family Weiss*, featuring Meryl Streep, James Woods, Fritz Weaver, and Rosemary Harris, combined fictional and historical figures to give a sort of history of the European ordeal from the viewpoint of some middle-class German Jews who were swept suddenly from comfort to horror. Vintage footage was inserted in a try for verisimilitude. (There's Herr Eichmann again.)

Critics, with Elie Wiesel, the personification of the Holocaust, taking the lead in deriding this pop version of history ("Trivializing the Holocaust") again made the case that like other such efforts, television was inherently unsuited to the task. At the very least, the

miniseries was chided for bowdlerizing and softening harsh realities.

Some of its defenders granted such objections, yet argued for the importance of reaching an enormous audience with information and insights that it might not have received in any other way and so was at least a contribution to a broader sympathy if not necessarily a deeper understanding of what the Holocaust meant for some of its victims.

Shandler goes over these and other examples of the stand-off between television and its assailants, including the endless dispute over Anne Frank's legacy and the dominant role taken in recent years by survivors of the camps, who have been afforded the mantle of authority as they die away. But as one of the historians quoted here observes, "The unprocessed oral reports of witnesses will tell us many things, but not about the Holocaust, because no one witnessed the Holocaust."

The final chapters go more directly into news coverage, including President Reagan's controversial visit to the Bitburg military cemetery and connections that some have found between the Holocaust and the bloodletting in Bosnia.

Shandler's writing is not always felicitous; he has a weakness for the multisyllabic, afflicting us with "the medium's polyvalence, its recombinant sensibility and bricolage aesthetic, its endless self-referentiality" and indulging in six "paradigms" and two "paradigmatics" in two paragraphs. But those who bear with him will find him an intelligent escort to a wide range of related matters.

Among the conclusions that the reader is likely to take away is what television does, when it comes to the Holocaust, is bound to be inadequate or worse. Yet, even the watchdog in Wiesel has come around to an appreciation of television's positive side in bringing millions of viewers together at times of crisis in the interests of shared human feelings. "The camera cannot lie," he discovered, "not when it is always there," an assertion that is itself open to dispute.

In Shandler's phrase, the "moral connoisseurship of Holocaust remembrance" seems to grow out of a "desire to transform one of the most terribly amoral episodes of human history . . . into some redemptive message, some inspirational — or at the very least cautionary — lesson." If a fair conclusion for this fair-minded study is needed, that will have to do. ■

book reports

TO KEEP THE WATERS TROUBLED: THE LIFE OF IDA B. WELLS

BY LINDA O. MCMURRY
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS. 400 PP. \$30.

Ida B. Wells (1862-1931), anti-lynching journalist and lifelong agitator, was already an icon of black and women's history before Linda O. McMurry, a North Carolina State University historian, undertook this biography. She adds a great deal of understanding and context to the already remarkable story: Wells was the daughter of a Mississippi slave family who left home and trained herself to be a polemical journalist. In her Memphis newspaper, the *Free Speech*, she argued that lynching was aimed at enforcing white supremacy; even more explosively, she observed that the "rapes" that led to these atrocities were often consensual relationships between white women and black men. Forced to abandon her newspaper, she built an international reputation as a lecturer and writer, not only on racism but on women's rights. After she settled in Chicago, she married a black lawyer, Ferdinand Barnett. She traveled less as they raised a family, but remained highly visible and vocal. McMurry has used letters and diaries that reveal the enormous dangers and opposition, North and South, that Wells faced in a time that has been called the nadir of American race relations. She also probes Wells's character and faults — her bad temper and insistence on dominating every organization that she joined. Less prominent in her final years, she was still worthy of the tribute the *Chicago Defender* paid to "the passing of a great woman."

MY PILGRIM'S PROGRESS: MEDIA STUDIES, 1950-1998

BY GEORGE W.S. TROW. PANTHEON BOOKS. 279 PP. \$24.

Any twentieth-century American reaches advanced years trailing a kind of media history, reflecting the diet of mass-produced journalism and entertainment all of us have taken in through eyes, ears, minds, and very pores. George W. S. Trow (who wrote the well-

received study of television culture, *Within the Context of No Context*, in 1981) has made his personal media history into this wandering book. He depicts his boyhood Manhattan media environment, centered on the *Herald Tribune*, Dwight David Eisenhower, and his father, a tabloid journalist. There are moments of enlightenment and fun when he pokes into files of old newspapers, but overall he leaves an impression of being too haughty to care whether he is understood.

PACIFICA RADIO: THE RISE OF AN ALTERNATIVE NETWORK

BY MATTHEW LASAR. TEMPLE UNIVERSITY PRESS. 277 PP. \$34.95.

Pacifica Radio was an upstream effort from the beginning. Its chief creator was Lewis Hill, a pacifist and a World War II conscientious objector. Being noncommercial, it was doomed to be chronically short of money. Yet Pacifica has lasted fifty years, and has grown stronger, adding four more FM stations to its original San Francisco outlet. Moreover, it has withstood intense political pressure. Charged during the cold war with communist leanings, it was scrutinized by several committees and the FBI; the FCC held up its license renewals for three years. But it survived and celebrated its semicentennial bedecked with prizes for its aggressive, disputative journalism, notably in providing an antiwar platform. Lasar chronicles internal struggles, the most decisive the contest that decided that Pacifica would not be merely the advocate of pacifism but an exemplar of the First Amendment, open to views of many individuals and groups.

A WOMAN OF THE TIMES: JOURNALISM, FEMINISM, AND THE CAREER OF CHARLOTTE CURTIS

BY MARILYN S. GREENWALD. OHIO UNIVERSITY PRESS. 251 PP. \$26.95.

This is a melancholy tale, not only because cancer cut short the life of an outstanding journalist, but because Charlotte Curtis (1928-1987) was ultimately let down by those she tried to

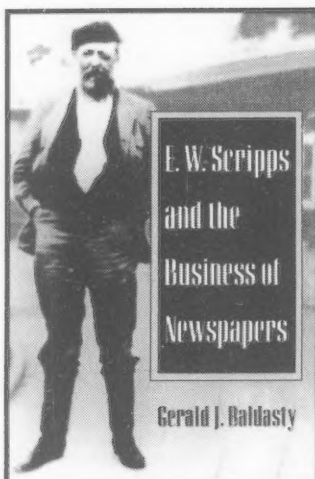
serve. Marilyn S. Greenwald of Ohio University has remarkably reconstructed the nuances of a career that started as a success story — Ohio journalist brings her tart style to *The New York Times* and revolutionizes society reporting, then rises in the hierarchy to become the editor of the newspaper's op-ed page. Including "feminism" in the title is ironic; Curtis chose not to side with the other women at the *Times* who sued the paper for discrimination in the 1970s; she preferred other causes and strategies, according to Greenwald. (My spouse, Betsy Wade, was a friend, then an adversary; her oral history is quoted.) In the end, Curtis was deposed to an ill-defined weekly column, which she wrote without complaint until her final illness. She stated the moral herself, when she warned a younger journalist, Anna Quindlen: "You will only have as much power as they wish you to have. . . . Do the best you can for yourself and for other women and don't blame yourself if that's not enough."

MANAGING THE PRESS: ORIGINS OF THE MEDIA PRESIDENCY, 1897-1933

BY STEPHEN PONDER. ST. MARTIN'S PRESS. 233 PP. \$45.

Contrary to the assumption that Franklin D. Roosevelt all but invented presidential press relations, Stephen Ponder of the University of Oregon shows how the preceding seven administrations contributed to the growth of the executive focus of news and to the importance, and self-importance, of the White House press corps. The central question raised here is how much we have defined successful presidents by their skills as news managers. The two Roosevelts are usually viewed as successful, as was their energetic output of news. Taft is seen as a failure; he scorned and ignored reporters. Does the public and historical verdict on a president therefore follow the verdict in the news? Ponder suggests as much for the past but adds that presidents have been increasingly successful in spinning and circumventing mainstream news.

— James Boylan



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excerpts

MADAME REPORTER

FROM **SEASONS OF HER LIFE: A BIOGRAPHY OF MADELEINE KORBEL ALBRIGHT**, BY ANN BLACKMAN.

SCRIBNER. 398 PP. \$27.



Madeleine worked on the *Wellesley College News* [graduation photo, left], a weekly that published on Thursdays and featured non-controversial stories about campus life.

Her first bylined story, written when she was a freshman and headlined "Hamburgers and Harvard, Diets and Dates," described low-calorie meals available in The Well, a popular campus eatery. "Calorie conscious?" Madeleine asked in her lead paragraph. "Hate liver and fish? The Well answers all these needs, according to Miss Aniela Gruszyska, supervisor." In her sophomore year, when Madeleine was an associate reporter, she wrote a front-page story on the importance of American students learning foreign languages, quoting five Wellesley language teachers in one nine-paragraph article. Her awkward opener: "Need for more complete communication, higher rewards in academic pursuits, promotion of national interest and better international understanding in a shrinking world were cited as reasons why Americans should study foreign languages."

In 1958, when she was associate news editor, Madeleine wrote a piece about John F. Kennedy, who was running for a second term in the U.S. Senate and was making a campaign stop at the Wellesley railroad station. By this time, Madeleine had learned the formula for a news story; the catchy lead, a few new facts to grab the readers' interest, and a memorable last paragraph, called the kicker: "No whistle blew and no train stopped, but Senator John F. Kennedy did saunter out on the platform of the Wellesley railroad station," Madeleine wrote. Her kicker: Kennedy was a half-hour late but signed a great many autographs, including "one for me, too."

Blackman is a correspondent in Time's Washington bureau.

COURTING THE PRESS

FROM **PLAYING FOR KEEPS: MICHAEL JORDAN AND THE WORLD HE MADE**, BY DAVID HALBERSTAM. RANDOM HOUSE. 423 PP. \$24.95.

Jordan was particularly good with the beat reporters in those early years, always accessible and friendly. Part of it was the way he had been raised, part his understanding that this was an important part of his job, part his natural confidence, and part his innate shrewdness. He realized that he could learn a great deal about the league and about other teams — including which players were having trouble with their teammates and their coaches — by talking to reporters informally. He soaked up information readily and traded tidbits of his own, learning, as good politicians learn, that to get information you have to give information. He seemed to have a sixth sense for which of the younger reporters were the comers,

the ones who soon would be stars and have their own columns — Mike Lupica, Michael Wilbon, David Remnick, Jan Hubbard — and were worth taking a little extra time with. He was, even then, an astute judge of quality.

Even though the media fascination with him was, by the standards of what was to come, relatively minor, it was immense for a Bulls player in that era, and Tim Hallam, the Bulls's press officer, was soon bombarded by requests for interviews. He would duly make a note of each request on a little pink slip and hand it to Jordan, who dutifully returned every call until about midseason when he came to understand that he was the only player on the team doing this, that everyone else let it fly. The great unwritten rule of the NBA was that if

a reporter wanted to talk to a player, he had to nab him in the locker room. In time, Jordan and Hallam worked out a deal: When Hallam had an interview he felt was important, Jordan would do it, but he could also order a steak and charge it to Hallam (even though Jordan was already collecting a handsome per diem.)

Halberstam is the author of sixteen books, including The Best and the Brightest and The Powers That Be.



THE SPINMEISTER MEETS HIS MATCH

FROM **ALL TOO HUMAN: A POLITICAL EDUCATION**, BY GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS. LITTLE, BROWN AND COMPANY. 456 PP. \$27.95.

For more than a year, Bob Woodward had been chronicling the economic policy wars inside our White House. His book, *The Agenda*, as he predicted in the letter I had hand-delivered to President Clinton eight months earlier, would be "the most serious contemporaneous examination of your administration's economic policy."

In the summer of 1993, several months into this project, Woodward's first call to me had sparked two simultaneous thoughts: *Oh, no!* and *I have arrived*. His books invariably created embarrassing headlines for their subjects, but his sources were assumed to be the most important, connected, and knowledgeable people in Washington. I was wary of Woodward but flattered and curious too. I also considered it part of my job to know what he was up to and make the best of it. We met for a late dinner at his Georgetown town house, where I received the full Woodward treatment.

The polished wood of his dining-room table was topped with neatly stacked, typed notes and a pocket tape recorder. Over home-roasted chicken, he hit me with memos from one of our first economic meetings, then some handwritten notes from another, followed by word-for-word transcripts of what I



had said at a third. Woodward's technique is no less effective for being so obvious: He flashes a glimpse of what he knows, shaded in a largely negative light, with the hint of more to come, setting up a series of prisoner's dilemmas in which each prospective source faces a choice: Do you cooperate and elaborate in return (you hope) for learning more and earning a better portrayal — for your boss and yourself? Or do you call his bluff by walking away in the hope that your reticence will make the final product less authoritative and therefore less damaging? If no one talks, there is no book. But someone — then everyone — always talks. The deadliest initial response was my instinctive one: "Well, it wasn't like that exactly . . ."

"Really? . . . Interesting . . . I didn't know that . . . Tell me . . ."

Our dance had begun, the mutual seduction of reporter and source. Woodward's calculated charm was custom-tailored to my intellectual vanity, professional pride, and personal loyalty to the president. I knew that Woodward always beguiled sources into saying more than they should. But like so many others who had supped at his table and spoken into his cassettes under the cover of "deep background," I was arrogant enough to believe that I could beat him at his own game, that my spin would win.

Stephanopoulos was senior adviser to President Clinton.

Anonymous Sources, Slippery Slopes

by Mike Hoyt

Charles G. Bakaly 3d, the spokesman for Mr. Starr, declined to discuss the matter. "We will not discuss the plans of this office or the plans of the grand jury in any way, shape, or form," he said.

These two declarative sentences appeared in a page-one exclusive by Don Van Natta Jr. in *The New York Times* on January 31. The story arrived at the height of the Senate impeachment trial and created a stir. It said that Kenneth Starr had concluded that he "has the constitutional authority to seek a grand jury indictment of President Clinton before he leaves the White House." This was attributed to "several" sources, none of them, apparently, Charles G. Bakaly III.

On March 12 came another story, this one widely covered: Bakaly abruptly resigned and hired a lawyer as Starr turned over to the Justice Department results of an internal investigation into the leak of that January 31 *Times* story. As the *Times* itself put it, "there was no doubt that Mr. Bakaly's departure and the unauthorized disclosures were linked."

What gives?

On one level, this situation is murky. The independent counsel has been under investigation by federal judge Norma Holloway Johnson about possible leaks related to grand jury investigations, and why he might toss Bakaly off the sled on this *non-grand-jury* story is hard to say.

From a narrower, journalistic angle, however, two possibilities present themselves. Either Bakaly did not leak, just as he asserted via Van Natta. Or he did, and persuaded the newspaper of record to falsely quote him saying he didn't.

Exactly what happened can't be known without more information, which may never arrive. (Van Natta's bureau chief, Michael Oreskes, says he can't discuss "who the source was or who it wasn't." He also says that the use of a false no-comment would violate *Times* standards. He has yet to hear from Justice.) But the incident serves as a departure point for thinking about how we bargain with our anonymous sources.

Not long ago at *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, reporters and editors engaged in a yearlong series of frank, small-group conversations about fairness and accuracy. Editors were surprised to hear one of their columnists describe how she had put into a story that X had no comment when, in fact, X was a source. "She didn't see anything wrong with it," says Gene Foreman, former managing editor, now teaching at Penn State. Some *Inquirer* sportswriters admitted using deceptive I.D.s for their sources. Such practices were strongly discouraged. "I get quite exercised about it," Foreman says.

Journalists face ever-stiffer competition against outlets with wildly varying sets of standards. Sources, meanwhile, are

increasingly savvy. So they have stronger bargaining position than they used to on such matters as how they'll be I.D.'d, says Bill Kovach, curator of the Nieman Foundation. "The leverage has shifted from the journalist to the source." Still, we need to bargain hard, and to remember who we bargain for.

Nobody who is realistic wants to outlaw anonymous sourcing. And journalists know that to limit it is to limit certain stories. Robert Kaiser, associate editor of *The Washington Post*, contends that the image of the anonymous source as a story manipulator is largely false: "More likely, that source is the young staff assistant who knows what's going on but is scared to death to talk about it" for the record. Some bargaining about identification, Kaiser says, "is normal."

Yet to use any anonymous source is to walk gingerly along a slippery slope. That slope increases its pitch this way: Anonymous but well identified. Anonymous and weakly identified. Anonymous and no I.D. Anonymous but deceptively identified. Anonymous and protected with a false no-comment. I can imagine a rationale for each of these steps down the slope. But at the same time, each step exponentially gambles our store of credibility. You can argue persuasively that it is a long distance between deception and no deception, but not that reporters never cross that line. All the way to *We deceived the readers in order to inform them*.

The nature of deceptive sourcing makes its frequency impossible to gauge. It is seen as enough of a potential threat by editors at *The Washington Post* to put this in written ethics rules: "We cannot offer to protect sources by writing inaccurately that they refused to talk to us." *The Wall Street Journal*, too, has recently taken steps to guard against the same problem.

The big test of how well we bargain came, of course, with the Monica mess. The Committee of Concerned Journalists (www.journalism.org/concern) studied both the frequency of anonymity during a slice of the scandal and the quality of source identification.

On the former point, it found that *The New York Times* seems to work harder at getting sources on the record than *The Washington Post*, with the *Los Angeles Times* in between.

On quality of identification, the committee analyzed more than 2,000 anonymously attributed "statements and allegations" in major media stories over four days in January and March '98, and found that six in ten were attributed to sources characterized "in the vaguest terms." Less than two in ten offered "even the slightest hint of the source's allegiances."

Readers and viewers resent this Trust Me journalism, and they are right. By "making anonymous-source reporting a routine matter, not an extraordinary matter," says Kovach, the media "got themselves into a situation." Time to start climbing out. ♦

Mike Hoyt (mh151@columbia.edu) is CJR's senior editor.

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We put our spotlight on the issue and made public officials realize that something had to be done. Now the state Board of Education has quadrupled the number of reading courses teacher candidates have to take; it is committed to putting a lot more teachers in classrooms to reduce class size.

And that is what good journalism can do: By shining the spotlight, it prods, nudges and cajoles public officials to act.



Bill Marimow
Managing Editor
The Sun, Baltimore

The Pew Center for Civic Journalism is pleased to present this message, another in a series on how journalists are working to improve news coverage by involving citizens - and to improve the community through their journalism. For more information, call 202-331-3200.



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When James Byrd Jr. was brutally dragged to his death behind a pickup last June, the eyes of the world focused on the small town of Jasper, Texas. As the news source for Southeast Texas, the Beaumont Enterprise devoted its pages to capturing the horror of the racially motivated slaying and to giving the region a forum to discuss the crime's implications.

Even as the national and international media descended on the town to cover the crime and ensuing trial, they turned to the Beaumont Enterprise in newsstands and online for the complete story. The newspaper dissected one of this country's worst hate crimes and offered evidence that people were trying to change.

Enterprise photographers and reporters looked beneath the surface to reveal the essence of the story. They took their readers to the gas station owner's back yard where the accused's truck was being held by the police. They showed the local cemetery where a hundred-year-old fence separating black and white graves was torn down. Their stories focused on the accused as well as the people whose lives were torn apart by the violence. Coverage was thorough, yet sensitive to family and community concerns. The newspaper's Reader Advisory Panel convened to offer ideas and insights that would help editors in the weeks following the slaying.

For its coverage of the Jasper tragedy, the Enterprise received a Texas Headliner award, a Katie award from the Dallas Press Club and two first places in the annual Best-of-Hearst metro newspapers competition. The Beaumont team of journalists was honored for its honest and in-depth look at an emotionally charged issue. Answering the need for understanding instead of fueling the flames of hate is one more way Hearst Newspapers enrich readers' lives every day.

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The Pantagraph (Bloomington-Normal, Ill.) 4/5/99

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The Hartford Courant 2/5/99

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Colorado Daily-News (Boulder) 3/3/98

Council Stands Against Drugs And Biting Dogs

Ozark County Times (Gainesville, Mo.) 12/10/97

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The Olathe (Kan.) Daily News 2/2/99

Clinton takes credit for drop in unwed birth rate

The Ashland (Ore.) Daily Tidings 10/5/96

Shooting witness helps build murder case

The Times (Northwest Ind.) 7/10/98



This image from Yugoslav television early today shows the wreckage of what the Serbian government says is a downed U.S. Air Force F-117 Nighthawk stealth fighter.

The Sun (Lowell, Mass.) 3/28/99
Page 1



Firefighters battle a blaze on Shattuck Street early yesterday morning.

The Sun (Lowell, Mass.) 3/28/99
Page 14

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